The Hanse As Artistic Network In Late Medieval Lübeck

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The Hanse As Artistic Network In Late Medieval Lübeck

Abstract
This study investigates the artistic network of merchants in the Hanse trade organization from ca. 1400-1530. Also known as the Hanseatic League, the Hanse functioned as a late-medieval trading organization before the advent of early modern global trade. As a critical node in the extensive Hanse trade network, the city of Lübeck, Germany stood unrivaled artistically and economically by any other cities in the Baltic region. Strongly connected to mercantile ports across the Baltic and North Seas, as well as inland to Westphalia and Cologne, Lübeck merchants bought, negotiated, and transported art from workshops across network lines. This dissertation uses both the urban image of Lübeck and carved and painted altarpieces as models for artistic transactions in the Hanse during the “Golden Age” of Lübeck in the fifteenth century. As the first study to investigate Lübeck art across multiple media within the Hanse network, this dissertation reveals the decisive roles merchants played as consumers and agents in the production, mobility, and use of works of art in the Baltic region. Like Venice and Nuremberg to the south and Antwerp to the west, Lübeck’s local and extraterritorial mercantile networks were instrumental in fueling an art market and crafting a civic identity in the late-medieval trade city.

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THE HANSE AS ARTISTIC NETWORK IN LATE MEDIEVAL LÜBECK

LAURA TILLERY

A DISSERTATION

in

HISTORY OF ART

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania

in

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THE HANSE AS ARTISTIC NETWORK IN LATE MEDIEVAL LÜBECK

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I owe many thanks to the people and institutions that guided and supported me through the completion of this dissertation. Many of the ideas in this project stem from my coursework with and research for Madeline H. Caviness, Mary Richardson Professor Emeritus, Department of Art and Art History, Tufts University. Under her guidance and scrupulous scholarship, I developed a passion for medieval art. Her research interest in German cities and the Sachsenspiegel law manuscripts inspired my early investigations on German civic art. I am also grateful to a number of other faculty members in the Department of Art and Art History at Tufts: Karen Overbey, Eva Hoffman and Christina Maranci. Their methods and approaches to the medieval period greatly influenced the conceptualization of this study on the Hanse and the Baltic.

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ABSTRACT

THE HANSE AS ARTISTIC NETWORK IN LATE MEDIEVAL LÜBECK

Laura Tillery
Larry Silver

This study investigates the artistic network of merchants in the Hanse trade organization from ca. 1400-1530. Also known as the Hanseatic League, the Hanse functioned as a late-medieval trading organization before the advent of early modern global trade. As a critical node in the extensive Hanse trade network, the city of Lübeck, Germany stood unrivaled artistically and economically by any other cities in the Baltic region. Strongly connected to mercantile ports across the Baltic and North Seas, as well as inland to Westphalia and Cologne, Lübeck merchants bought, negotiated, and transported art from workshops across network lines.

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2.58 Copy of 2.56, original panel by Wilhelm Schode, 1930, oil on canvas (Trondheim: Nidaros Cathedral Museum)

2.59 “*New* Bergenfahrer Altarpiece. Reconstruction from Christoph Emmendörfter (1997), p. 75

2.60 Bergenfahrer chapel, in Christoph Emmendörfer (1997), p. 47 cf. prewar photo in nave of St. Mary Church facing west. Red arrow indicates entrance to chapel, looking down the nave toward the two western towers

2.61 “*Old* Bergenfahrer Altarpiece, c. 1410-1420, Bergenfahrer Chapel, St. Mary Church cf. “*New* Bergenfahrer Altarpiece, 1522-24, Bergenfahrer Chapel, St. Mary Church
Chapter 3

3.1 Hans Memling, *Passion Altarpiece or Greverade Altarpiece*, [open with frame], 1491. Tempera and oil on oak panels. Originally installed in Greverade Chapel, Lübecker Dom (Lübeck: St. Annen-Museum)

3.2 Hans Memling, *Passion Altarpiece or Greverade Altarpiece*, [closed view], 1491. Tempera and oil on oak panels. Originally installed in Greverade Chapel, Lübecker Dom (Lübeck: St. Annen-Museum)

3.3 Hans Memling, *Greverade Altarpiece/Passion Altarpiece*, [first opening]: St. Blaise, St. John the Baptist, St. Jerome, St. Giles, 1491, installed in Greverade Chapel, Lübecker Dom (Lübeck: St. Annen-Museum)

3.4 Hans Memling, *Greverade Altarpiece/Passion Altarpiece*, [final view]: Passion, Crucifixion & Ascension, 1491, installed in Greverade Chapel, Lübecker Dom (Lübeck: St. Annen-Museum)

3.5 Hans Memling, *Scenes from the Passion of Christ/ Turin Passion*, c. 1470, oil on oak panel (Turin: Galleria Sabauda)

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3.7 Master of Schöppingen, *Halderner Altar*, c. 1450 (Schöppingen: St. Brictius)

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3.9 Map of Hanse trade routes (Lübeck: European Hanse Museum)

3.10 The Caramlite monastery, the Easterling House, and Oosterlingplein. Detail of the plan of Bruges by Marcus Gheeraerts, 1562. Detail of Fig. 1.43.

3.11 Hugo van der Goes, *Portinari Altarpiece*, 1475-76 (Florence: Uffizi)

3.12 Hans Memling, *The Last Judgment Altarpiece*, 1473 (Gdańsk: Muzeum Narodowe)

3.13 Hermen Rode, *Greverade Diptych*, 1494, photo *in situ* in Marienkirche. Originally in St. Mary Church. Oil on oak panel. Destroyed WWII


3.15 Hermen Rode, *Greverade Diptych*, 1494, Originally in St. Mary Church. Oil on oak panel. Destroyed WWII. [open view] [left] Death of Mary [right] Crucifixion scene


3.18 Bernt Notke and workshop (?), *Gregormesse*, between 1497-1505, oil and tempera on oak. Originally in St. Marienkirche. Destroyed WWII. Photo: Wilhelm Castelli [color]

3.20 Notke (?) attribution. [left to right] Notke, *Schonenfahrer Altarpiece*, God the Father (c. 1475); cf. *Dance of Death* (Reval Tallinn), c. 1470-1510, detail of Emperor; cf. *Gregormesse*, c. 1500 (detail)


3.25 Notke, Århus Altarpiece [detail], *Mass of St. Gregory*, second opening in altarpiece for Århus Cathedral, installed 1479

3.26 Notke (?) *Gregormesse* cf. Notke Århus Cathedral


3.35 Rode, *Sts. Nicholas and Viktor Altarpiece*, iconographic markings in graphite behind sculpture


3.37 Hermen Rode [painting] & circle of Johannes Stenrat [carvings], *Altarpiece of St. Luke (Lukas-Altar)*, 1484 (Lübeck: St. Annen-Museum)


3.43 St. Elizabeth cycle on the *Lettner* of the Holy Ghost Hospital in Lübeck; c. 1440. Westphalian workshop, paint on oak.

3.44 Notke workshop, St. Elizabeth painted cycle in Reval altarpiece [outer images] cf. Holy Ghost Hospital in Lübeck painted cycle of St. Elizabeth (c. 1440) [inner images] Elizabeth performing good deeds/service to the poor

3.45 Notke workshop, St. Elizabeth in Reval altarpiece [right] cf. Holy Ghost Hospital in Lübeck painted cycle of St. Elizabeth (c. 1440) [left] St. Elizabeth attributes


3.49 Notke workshop, *Dance of Death* Fragment, Reval; oil on canvas, dated late 15th century

3.50 Master of the Legend of St. Lucy, *Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads* [Closed view] Annunciation, after 1493, tempera on panel (Tallinn: Niguliste Museum)

3.51 Master of the Legend of St. Lucy, *Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads* [first opening] after 1493, tempera on panel (Tallinn: Niguliste Museum)

3.52 Master of the Legend of St. Lucy, *Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads* [final view] after 1493, tempera on panel (Tallinn: Niguliste Museum)


**Conclusion**

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INTRODUCTION

LÜBECK, QUEEN OF THE HANSE

This study investigates the artistic network of Lübeck merchants in Hanse trade organization—with particular attention to carved and painted altarpieces. During the fifteenth century, Lübeck stood unrivaled artistically and economically by any other cities in the Baltic region. Lübeck’s population reached 20,000-25,000 before 1350, making it one of Europe’s ten largest cities, and in German-speaking lands, it was second in size after Cologne.¹ The city’s economic and cultural prosperity was largely due to its important role in the Hanse. Often called the “Head of the Hanse” (das Haupt der Hanse) or the “Queen of the Hanse” (die Königin der Hanse), Lübeck stood at the geographic heart of the Hanse trading network.

The Hanse became integral to the ideological foundations of Lübeck: one cannot speak of the Hanse without Lübeck, and conversely, one cannot speak of Lübeck independent of her role in the Hanse. Connected to littoral and riverine towns in Westphalia, Flanders, Sweden, Denmark, and Estonia, Hanse merchants capitalized on Lübeck’s geographic position to specialize in the exchange of goods between the eastern Baltic Sea and northwestern Europe. Alongside the raw materials and finished goods

flowing in and out of late-medieval Lübeck, local merchants also facilitated the mobility of artworks across Hanse trade routes: merchants bought, negotiated, and transported art like commodities from workshops in Hanse cities.

The term Hanse derives from *hansa*, an Old High German word (lat. *cohors*), meaning ‘troop’ or ‘crowd’. In the fourteenth century, the term *Hansen* denoted a group, band of people, community, or guild of long-distance merchants traveling to foreign territories in northwestern Europe. From its conception, the Hanse network depended on the dual cooperation of traveling merchants *and* towns: the Hanse functioned as a community of traveling merchants who maintained citizenship as burghers in participating Hanse towns. Hence, merchants in Hanse towns proudly asserted both civic and trade pride.

Following the structure of the Hanse network as a collective of merchants and towns, this study focuses on both the city of Lübeck and the artistic and extraterritorial connections of the city’s merchants through the Hanse trade. The conceptual framework of this study stems from Lübeck’s artistic, spatial, and networked relationships to extraterritorial cities and regions through trade. I use the term network to encompass such connections between individual merchants, merchant groups, and mercantile towns. The

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4 On networks, Wim Blockmans, Mikhail Krom, and Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz, “Maritime trade and Europe 1300-1600: commercial networks and urban autonomy,” in
geographic perimeters of this study are limited to the nodal cities of the Hanse network, with primary focus on Lübeck as a strongly connected node to the edges of the North and Baltic Seas, including Bergen, London, Bruges, Danzig (Gdańsk), and Reval (Tallinn), among others.

This study concentrates on Lübeck during the city’s “Golden Age” in the fifteenth century. At this time, local Lübeck artistic workshops, specializing in polychromed and carved wooden sculpture, proliferated, and the city’s position within the Hanse remained strong. In considering the Hanse as an artistic network, I focus on the artistic connections and exchanges in and between nodal cities, the mobility of works of art across network lines, the movement of artists in the region, and role of the merchants as consumers and agents. Ultimately, this study demonstrates how Lübeck and Lübeck merchants undoubtedly played a crucial role in the production and circulation of art in the Hanse trade region.

**LÜBECK AND THE HANSE**

The Hanse organization was a trade alliance that was formed from the collective participation of nearly 200 towns and countless merchants. For nearly five hundred years

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from the middle of the twelfth to the mid-seventeenth century, Hanse merchants from Middle Low German-speaking areas formed an extensive commercial network engaged in foreign trade. The Hanse protected the trading privileges of merchant groups from several towns across northern Europe from Livonia in the eastern Baltic, through Prussia, Pomerania, Saxony, Westphalia, and Cologne. Hanse merchants shared a common language (Niederdeutsch), heritage, and most importantly, a mutual interest in trade.

From its conception, the Hanse was founded on a cooperative principle to protect trade. Hanse merchants established settlements, or trading posts, eventually known as Kontor, in the four corners of the Hanse trade region: Bergen in the Kingdom of Norway; Bruges in the County of Flanders; London in the Kingdom of England; and Novgorod in the Russian principality of Novgorod. Based on the location of these trading outposts, the network of the Hanse can be mapped across the Baltic and North Seas. Local rulers granted trading privileges to these enclaves of Low German-speaking Hanse merchants, who could live for months or years at a time in the Kontor conducting trade business.

The English term of the Hanse, ‘the Hanseatic League’, implies a central governing body overseeing all trade operations. However, the organization of the Hanse was never hierarchical: the Hanse had no central authority, no governing body, and no

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5 The four Kontore maintained their own settlement infrastructure: Novgorod’s Peterhof, London’s Stalhof (Steelyard), Bruges’s Oosterlingenhuis, and Bergen’s Tyskebrygge. Each also had their own seal, articles of association, and jurisdiction over internal disputes. On the Kontore, and Bergen in particular, see Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz, Trades, Ties, and Tensions: The interaction of Lübecker, Overijsslers and Hollanders in Late Medieval Bergen (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2008); Mike Burkhardt, Der hansische Bergenhandel im Spätmittelalter: Handel, Kaufleute, Netzwerke (Cologne, 2009); and ibid., “Kontors and Outposts” in A Companion to the Hanseatic League, ed. Donald J. Harreld (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 127-161.
seal or foundation charter. Even though Lübeck did host the Hanse Diets (*Hansetag*) beginning in 1356, as a forum in which merchants could air grievances or solve trade imbalances, the city did not become the *de facto* leader of the trade organization. The appellation of Lübeck as the “Queen of the Hanse” was symbolic in name only and did not bear any formal privileges. Nevertheless, as we shall see throughout this dissertation, Lübeck merchants did utilize the city’s geographic position and economic importance to promote the status of Lübeck in urban representations and to facilitate the mobility of works of art.

The Hanse network specialized in the transport of raw materials and finished goods between the eastern Baltic and northern Europe. The main products of Hanse trade in the Baltic included: fish from Norway and Scania, especially dried cod (stockfish) and herring; cereal and hemp from Poland, Prussia, and Livonia; hops from Low German inland towns; pelts, amber, wax, and honey from Reval (Tallinn),

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7 *Hansetag* did not meet regularly, only when problems arose, and usually only attended by those wishing to solve disputes. There were regular *Hansetag* up until 1669. Hammel-Kiesow, *Die Hanse*, pp. 68-77; and Jürgen Sarnowsky, “The ‘Golden Age’ of the Hanseatic League,” in *A Companion to the Hanseatic League*, ed. Donald J. Harreld (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 64-100.
Novgorod, and Riga; felled oak from Danzig (Gdańsk); cloth and textiles from England and Flanders; salt from Lüneburg; and wine from the Rhineland. Lübeck did not cultivate any raw materials, since the city was only known for its small supply of beer and a rough woolen, known as Lübeck cloth.

Lübeck thrived as a trading post, where goods and information passed through the city. The city was situated at the center of the Hanse trade region, strategically located between the main east-west trade arteries alongside other Wendish Hanse towns on the southern Baltic coast, including Wismar, Rostock, and Stralsund [Fig. 1]. According to Carsten Jahnke, Lübeck positioned itself uniquely in the Middle Ages as a trade city, in that its newfound economic status rivaled other old trading cities, yet it was also the oldest of the ‘new’ cities along the Baltic.⁹

The city’s most important exchange products were supplying salt from nearby Lüneburg with herring from Scania for the Lenten diet, and east-west trade linking Flemish cloth and eastern Baltic wax.¹⁰ Ships from the east would sail from the Baltic Sea, upstream to the River Trave twenty-seven kilometers to Lübeck, where the goods would be unloaded from the flat-bottomed Hanse cog ships onto carts or smaller boats for inland transfer; goods could then travel either by a short, direct, overland road to the port of Hamburg or by the Stecknitz canal, which was completed in 1398 to connect the River

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¹⁰ Ibid., p. 241.
Elbe to River Trave. From Hamburg, the goods would be repacked onto Hanse cog ships on the River Elbe to the North Sea, or to travel inland toward Westphalia. If ships traveled via Lübeck, they would avoid sailing around the Skaw (Cape Skage) at the tip of Denmark (Jutland), which was less expensive, since it did not require inland unloading. As a result, the Skaw passage was more desirable for larger ships with higher tonnage, but less secure, since the Lübeck route guaranteed security.

In short, Lübeck functioned as a redistribution location, negotiating trade between local and regional entities, comparable to Venice, Genoa, Bruges, Antwerp, and London in the fifteenth century. However, unlike these contemporaneous trade cities, Lübeck neither supplied raw materials for the international market nor boasted an international merchant community. Moreover, Low German Hanse merchants were organized differently from other merchants in the fourteenth century in southern Germany and the Mediterranean. Italian merchants, for example, formed large-scale companies involving several business partners for a defined period of time to collect great wealth; accordingly, the accumulation of wealth was limited to an elite group. In contrast, Hanse merchants opted into a range of small-scale mercantile guilds and corporations, dependent on kinship, friendship, and mutual trust with foreign traders from multiple towns.

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Indeed, late-medieval Lübeck was entirely formed around the collective, not the individual. Lübeck’s political, social, and economic spheres were dictated by corporative enterprises: governed by a town council, ordered socially by merchant urban group corporations, confraternities, and guilds, and economically dependent on long distance trade. The trade partnerships among Hanse merchants were mostly organized in small trading companies, such as the Schonenfahrer (Traders from Scania), or the Kaufleute-Kompanie (Merchants Company). Such merchants groups organized themselves collectively, so that trade partners were located in multiple nodal cities to facilitate the exchange between raw materials and capital.

In the particular case of Baltic oak, felled inland in modern-day Poland, Hanse merchants would mark the planks in the port of Danzig before shipping westward to Lübeck. Thus, the merchants in Lübeck transporting the Baltic oak to markets in the Low Countries did not need to inspect the quality of the product at port, because they deferred to the trust and judgment of their business partners in Danzig. By partnering with long-distance merchants, Lübeck merchants could keep costs low by guaranteeing the quality of the product at its original port.


15 On the trading companies in Lübeck, see Chapter Two.  
To be sure, Hanse trading power was strongest between 1370-1490. In 1370, the Treaty of Stralsund tipped to the Hanse in favor of trade, essentially ensuring that Denmark surrendered its trading powers. In the last decades of the fifteenth century, the Dutch and Danish began to circumvent the Hanse cooperative and went directly to the eastern Baltic for trade. As a result, Hamburg, Bremen, and Danzig emerged as the leading Hanse cities in Baltic and Atlantic trade, quickly surpassing Lübeck in sea traffic and trade power. While the Hanse continued into the sixteenth century, Lübeck’s position on the east-west trade route became geographically irrelevant.

BRIEF HISTORIOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF THE HANSE

The historiography of the Hanse is closely aligned with modern German history. The first modern European historians to celebrate the Hanse stemmed from nascent German nationalism and patrimony. During the nineteenth century, the Hanse was seen as a proto-German trade league, an example of German nationhood in the pre-modern world, as Germany emerged as a unified state for the first time. The first journals supporting early scholarship on the Hanse were founded in 1870/71, including the Hansischer Geschichtsverein, Hansische Geschichtsblätter, and the Zeitschrift für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde (ZVLGA). The history of the Hanse, with

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19 Wubs-Mrozewicz provides a concise historiographic overview in: “The Hanse in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: An Introduction,” pp. 20-21. See also Donald J.
particular focus on the role of Lübeck as its leader, quickly became a source of national pride for the emerging German nation.20

The medieval glories of the Hanse also became a source for regional pride in northern Germany. For instance, the revival of the medieval Hanse rivaled the growing power of Prussia.21 Erwin Panofsky, writing in 1953 after emigrating to the United States, reflected on this nationalistic moment in German history: “where European art historians were conditioned to think in terms of national and regional boundaries, no such limitations existed for the Americans.”22 In other words, regional identity acted as a substitute for the calls of German nationalism in Berlin in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Regional and national pride further translated local conservation to preserve the great monuments of the German past in early twentieth-century Lübeck. Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler der Freien und Hansestadt Lübeck (The Architectural and Art Monuments of the Free Hanseatic City of Lübeck) were published in five volumes from

20 Such as Georg Friedrich Sartorius, Geschichte des Hanseatischen Bundes, 3 vols. (Göttingen: H. Dietrich, 1802-1808); and Dietrich Schäfer, Die Deutsche Hanse (Bielefeld 1914).
1906 to 1929 to document the churches and their furnishings.\textsuperscript{23} These volumes also promoted the cultural patrimony of Lübeck’s built environment, describing the city hall, municipal buildings, and the seven medieval brick churches with their high and side altars, organs, epitaphs, wall paintings, and grave plates. Contemporaneous to this project in the first decades of the twentieth century, German art historians continued to focus on fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Lübeck painting and sculpture, especially the workshops of known artists: Bernt Notke (c. 1440-1509), Hermen Rode (c. 1430-1504), Claus Berg (c. 1470-1532), and Benedikt Dreyer (1495-1555).\textsuperscript{24}

Given the role cultural pride took in the shaping of Lübeck art and the Hanse prior to the 1930s, it is unsurprising that the National Socialist Party (NSDAP) praised the Hanse as a pre-modern victory of German colonial expansion to the Baltic (Slavic) east. The NSDAP adopted the Hanse as an economic system led by Germany and the Teutonic Order that successfully settled the Baltic East in the medieval era. The racist ideologies of party leaders further promoted the superiority of German culture in the eastern Baltic, arguing for the righteous conversion of Slavic peoples to the Christian faith: the expansion of German settlements flowed from Lübeck, the most important German Baltic city. Following this logic, alongside the newfound religion came Lübeck law, Low

German language, and *German* culture. Historian Fritz Rörig promoted Lübeck and the Hanse during the Nationalistic Socialist period, arguing for the right of the German people to occupy territory that it had settled in the medieval past.\(^{25}\)

The significance of Lübeck in terms of German cultural patrimony was further solidified in 1942, when Lübeck was destroyed by Royal Air Force’s first air raid on civilian targets. On Palm Sunday (28-29 March) in 1942, the Royal Air Force (RAF) bombed the city, causing a firestorm that left nearly one third of the city in complete ruins [Fig. 2].\(^{26}\) It is worth noting that Lübeck was targeted before Cologne (30 May 1942), demonstrating that Lübeck maintained a leading position in German historical importance. The air raid in Lübeck was a tactical maneuver undertaken by Allied forces in direct retaliation of the Luftwaffe’s offensive attacks on Coventry, England in 1940-1941. In particular, the RAF targeted St. Mary Church (St. Marienkirche)—the civic symbol of the Hanse city—and destroyed the majority of its church furnishings, including notable works discussed in this study: Bernt Notke’s *Dance of Death* [Fig. 1.15-1.16], *Schonenfahrer Altarpiece* [Figs. 2.38-2.40], and *Mass of St. Gregory* [Fig. 3.18], the “Old” and “New” *Bergenfahrer Altarpiece* [Figs. 2.45, 2.59], and Hermen Rode’s

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\(^{25}\) Rörig applied the period terms of *Lebensraum* and *Volksgeschichte* to Lübeck Hanse history. In spite of this, his research on the medieval city and Lübeck was appreciated well into the 1970s. Noodt discusses his NSDAP affiliations, particularly his role as “Beirat der Nordostdeutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft und seine Aktivitäten.” In Birgit Noodt, “Fritz Rörig (1882-1952): Lübeck, Hanse und Volksgeschichte” *Zeitschrift Verein für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde (ZVLGA)* 87 (2007): pp. 155-180.

Greverade Diptych [Figs. 3.14-3.15], among others. In the immediate postwar years, St. Marienkirche was rebuilt to its original late-medieval glory, preserving the two bells on the floor of the south tower that fell sixty meters on that fatal night in 1942.

After the Second World War, Lübeck fell into the Federal Republic of Germany (Bundesrepublik Deutschland, BRD, or West Germany) territory in Schleswig-Holstein; however, the Wendish Hanse cities in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern including Rostock, Stralsund, and Wismar, were located in the German Democratic Republic (Deutsche Demokratische Republik, DDR, or East Germany) territory. The historical interpretation of the Hanse was further divided along the Two Germanys: East German scholars reviewed the Hanse as an egalitarian collective, whereas West German scholars emphasized the capitalistic and economic enterprises of the free market. East German ideology also supported the participatory roles of traders, including burghers, merchants, shippers, boats men, bargemen, and other seafarers in the Hanse collective. As Hanse historian Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz suggests, in the DDR the idea of the Hanse as a confederation of towns was a “welcome illustration of the fight against feudalism in medieval Europe.”

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27 I rely on the prewar photography of local Lübeck photographers Johannes Nöhring (1934-1913) and Wilhelm Castelli (1901-1984), who supplied the first photo illustrations to accompany art historical studies on Lübeck prior to 1942.
In the Federal Republic of Germany, the postwar years played host to the first blockbuster Hanse exhibit in 1973 in Cologne, entitled “Hanse in Europe: A Bridge between Markets, 12th to 17th Centuries” at the Cologne Municipal Museum, September 1973.\textsuperscript{31} French historian Philippe Dollinger (1904-1999), a student of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre at the University of Strasbourg, published \textit{La Hanse (XIIe-XVIIe siècles)} in 1964, which was eventually translated into German (\textit{Die Hanse}, 1966), and English (\textit{The German Hansa}, 1970).\textsuperscript{32} Dollinger’s study was the first to provide a general history of the Hanse, independent of modern German national and regional ideologies.\textsuperscript{33} It also marked a turning-point in Hanse studies in encouraging non-German scholars to attend to the internationality of the medieval trade organization.

Since the reunification of Germany and the foundation of the European Union, the Hanse is celebrated today as a trade collective transgressing international geo-political boarders. This revisionist stance is partly due to the regained access of archival documents and sources that were scattered across archives in the BRD, DDR, the Soviet Union, and other Soviet Bloc countries.\textsuperscript{34} Lübeck archival materials, taken from a salt mine in Saxony during the Second World War to the Soviet Union, returned piecemeal to

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Dollinger, \textit{The German Hansa}, 1970.
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the Lübeck archive from 1992-2000. In addition, further complications from the new geo-political orders stem from the debate over national patrimony of cities, such as Danzig (Gdańsk), Reval (Tallinn), Riga, and Dorpat (Tartu). In recent years there has been a surge of publications in English reassessing the Hanse and its role in pre-modern maritime trade by European historians. We can see the internationalization of the Hanse explicitly in the new European Hanse Museum (Europäisches Hansemuseum), which opened in Spring 2015 in Lübeck and places emphasis on the Hanse’s trans-national collectivity in the pre-modern era. Today, the Hanse remains a historical term, although the German national airline Lufthansa certainly recalls the medieval trading network.

35 Similarly, Reval/Tallinn archives were in Göttingen during the Cold War, and then moved to Hamburg where they currently reside. See Chapter Two for this modern history of the Lübeck archives.

36 For instance, the Baltic States were occupied, first by Soviets, then Nazis, and the Soviets again until the Baltic States established national independence in 1991. For these reasons, the interpretation of extraterritorial works of art in Estonian art historical scholarship today continues to be closely connected with Estonian nationalism. On the state of the field, see the special issues: “The Geographies of Art History in the Baltic Region,” ed. Katrin Kivimaa, Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/ Studies on Art and Architecture vol. 19, no. 3/4 (2010); and “Debating German Heritage: Art History and Nationalism during the Long Nineteenth Century,” ed. Kristina Jõekalda and Krista Kodres Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/ Studies on Art and Architecture vol. 23, no. 3/4 (2014).

DEFINING LÜBECK ART IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Given the close relationship between Lübeck and the Hanse in the fifteenth century, Lübeck art has had many descriptors in art historical studies, including North German, Brick Gothic (Backsteingotik), Baltic Art (Baltische Kunst, Kunst im Ostseeraum), Hanse Gothic (Hansegotik), and Hanseatic art (Hansekunst). In Lübeck during the first half of the fifteenth century, painting and sculpture came from extraterritorial Flemish, Westphalian, and northern German workshops through trade connections. Yet, by the end of the fifteenth century, local workshops dominated regional production in north Germany and the Baltic. Indeed, the style of Lübeck sculpture and painting was so prevalent in Sweden, for example, that Aron Andersson describes exported Lübeck sculpture and retables as Hanse Gothic. It is clear that Lübeck held a variety of regional styles across the fifteenth century, so much so that Gustav Hillard described Lübeck art as “…the result not of a style, but of a city” (“Die lubische Kunst ist nicht das Ereignis eines Stils, sondern das Ereignis einer Polis”).

Scholars have also attempted, usually under the guise of nationalistic sentiments, to define a pan-Hanseatic art and culture across the Baltic, flowing from Lübeck. In particular, Lübeck and its surrounding built environment demonstrate a rare conformity in material and style. The regional style of North Germany in the fifteenth century is defined as Backsteingotik, or Gothic brick. The coastal terrain is mostly flat, dominated by brick gothic spires, gables, merchant houses, and most significantly, no useable stone. As a result of the lack of accessible stone quarries, north Germany is almost entirely comprised of red brick architecture. The churches were also built in the choirless hall style in Wendish Hanse cities on the northern German coast, including Lübeck, Stralsund, Rostock, Wismar, and Greifswald.41 Kurt Gerstenberg published Deutsche Sondergotik (German Special Gothic) in 1913, in which he argued that the Sondergotik is Germany’s original counterpart to French High Gothic.42 Gerstenberg compares the unified spatial qualities of the German Hall church (Hallenkirche, ca. 1350-1550) to the spirit, mood, and ethnic character of the German people, as an expression of the burghers.43 Gerstenberg and others championed the German Special Gothic as an autonomous style, distinct from the High Gothic in France and England. In other words,

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41 See Chapter One on Lübeck architecture.
43 Gerstenberg, Deutsche Sondergotik, esp. pp. 35-36.
this is not French Flamboyant or British Perpendicular late Gothic, rather a regional, distinct late Gothic.\textsuperscript{44}

**ADOLPH GOLDSCHMIDT**

The famed German art historian Adolph Goldschmidt (1863-1944) wrote the first comprehensive study on late-medieval Lübeck art that did not solely attend to Gothic brick architecture.\textsuperscript{45} Born nearby in Hamburg, and writing in the last decade of the nineteenth century under his doctoral supervisor Anton Springer (1825-1891) at the University of Leipzig, Goldschmidt’s 1889 doctoral thesis entitled *Lübecker Malerei und Plastik bis 1530* (*Lübeck Painting and Sculpture until 1530*) framed Lübeck sculpture within the socio-cultural context of the Hanse and the devotional groups in Lübeck.\textsuperscript{46} Goldschmidt likely turned to nearby Lübeck to write on the familiar Hanseatic mercantile culture, since a comprehensive medieval study on Hamburg, whose main medieval monuments were destroyed in a fire in 1842, was not possible.\textsuperscript{47} Goldschmidt argues that:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{44} On the late Gothic, see Jan Białostocki, “Late Gothic: Disagreements about the Concept” *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 29 (1966): pp. 76-105.
\textsuperscript{46} Leipzig was one of the few universities in Germany to study art history. The impressive roster of students also included Max J. Friedländer (1867-1958) and Paul Clemen (1866-1947). In Brush, “Adolph Goldschmidt,” p. 245.
\textsuperscript{47} Goldschmidt was the eldest son of a wealthy Jewish Hamburg banking family, similar to his contemporary and friend Aby Warburg. See Colin Eisler, “Goldschmidt’s Fate—
To become acquainted with Lübeck art from the fourteenth to sixteenth century, one must not forget two factors, which already at this time formed the main arteries of the life of Lübeck, that one must also assume that the products of art have not been able to escape their influence. The one factor is more external, the other more internal in nature, it is the Hanse and the spiritual brotherhoods.  

According to Goldschmidt, Lübeck painting and sculpture in the late-medieval era must be considered within both the city’s economic ties to the Hanse and local confraternities who decorated churches for devotion. Following his short introduction, “Die Hanse und die geistlichen Brüderschaften,” in which he outlines the socio-cultural motivations for patronage in the city, Goldschmidt’s gives a chronological survey of medieval monuments in Lübeck by medium.

To be sure, Goldschmidt was one of the first German art historians to turn away from the classicizing norms of art to concentrate on medieval art, especially sculpture and manuscript illumination. Goldschmidt helped popularize the study of German medieval sculpture at a time when most art history faculty specialized in ancient art or the Italian Assimilation by Appropriation” in Adolph Goldschmidt (1863-1944): Normal Art History im 20. Jahrhundert, ed. Gunnar Brands and Heinrich Dilly (Weimar: VDG, 2009), pp. 121-123.


49 As Kathryn Brush notes, Goldschmidt took after Springer to favor history, connoisseurship, and the biographies of artists as way to elevate the nascent discipline of art history in Germany. The discipline of medieval art history in Germany became popular only after German unification in 1871, when nationalistic enthusiasm for pre-modern German empires ignited studies on the Carolingian, Ottonian, Salian, and Hohenstaufen eras. In Shaping of Art History, pp. 10-11, 26-32.
Renaissance.  

During his prolific career, Goldschmidt continued to write on medieval media, especially ivory, bronze, and vellum, only to return to the austere northern German monuments in articles on Bernt Notke’s *Gregormesse* (1896) and the workshops and oeuvre of Notke and Hermen Rode (1900). Goldschmidt was also good friends with the Swedish art historian Johnny Roosval (1879-1965), who eventually became professor of art history at the University of Stockholm and published the highly influential essays on northern European art disseminated in Scandinavia.

Goldschmidt was a formalist who considered style before patronage and use; nonetheless, the seminal art historian did attempt to give historical context to Lübeck painting and sculpture. He was analytic and descriptive, and he balanced iconography and visual evidence with historical research. One of his students from Berlin, Kurt

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50 Goldschmidt’s Festschriften were published in 1923 and 1935, and attest to the impact of his scholarship on the next generation of German art historians: *Festschrift für Adolph Goldschmidt zum 60. Geburtstag am 15. Januar 1923: mit einer Bibliographie der Schriften Adolph Goldschmidt und seiner Schule*, ed. Ludwig Baldass (Leipzig, 1923); and *Adolph Goldschmidt zu seinem siebenzigsten Geburtstag am 15. Januar 1933, dargebracht von allen seinem Schülern, die in den Jahren 1922 bis 1933 bei ihm gehört und promoviert haben* (Berlin, 1935). Over the course of his career in Halle and Berlin, Goldschmidt supervised over fifty dissertations on medieval art, as well as the postdoctoral work of Erwin Panofsky and Walter Paatz.


53 In an anecdote, he described Hermen Rode’s figures as always looking like they have a cold (“Beim Lübecker Maler Hermen Rode sehen die Menschen alle aus als ob sie
Weitzmann, later wrote that Goldschmidt’s methodology wedded a close visual analysis to a broader idea.\(^{54}\) We can see such an approach explicitly in Goldschmidt’s consideration of collective patronage and the wider economic connections outside Lübeck in his doctoral study. Despite Goldschmidt’s deep commitment to the visual and historical, the impact of Goldschmidt’s foundational work on Lübeck art seems to have mostly encouraged further studies on specific artists, materials, or decades.

Goldschmidt paved the way for the study on Lübeck art and sculpture in two distinct ways: the separation of painting and sculpture, and the interest in attributing unknown masters to names mentioned in local archival documents. In his study, Goldschmidt examines medieval objects according to medium—either painting or sculpture, but never both. In other words, he attends to the medium specificity of painting or sculpture, but not the altarpiece as a composite, multimedia object made up of painted oak wings and polychromed carved images. Moreover, in the last section of his seminal study Goldschmidt included an index on Lübeck painters and sculptors to 1530 from archival documents.\(^{55}\) Over one hundred years after Goldschmidt published his doctoral thesis, art historians continue to use Goldschmidt’s original attributions of unknown masters.


\(^{55}\) The Lübeck archivist Dr. Wilhelm Brehmer assisted Goldschmidt.
masters as well as his attributions by known Lübeck masters. As a result of
Goldschmidt’s work, scholarship on Lübeck art and the Hanse have maintained separate
lines of inquiry until recent years: Hanse historians rarely include the dissemination of art
across Hanse trade routes, and art historical studies have primarily focused on the
attribution of Lübeck masters.

THE BALTIC

A concurrent field to history and art history in the modern era is the notion of the
geography of art, or Kunstgeographie.56 The geography of art attempts to define artistic
production in terms of environmental factors. In other words, art looks the way it does
because of various social, economic, or material considerations related to its location of
production.57 Similar to the history of the Hanse, the idea of the Baltic has carried several

56 Jan Białoostocki, “The Baltic as an Artistic region in the Sixteenth Century” Hafnia 4
(1976): pp. 11-24; Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Toward a Geography of Art (Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 2004); ibid., “Baltic Reflections” Baltic Journal of Art
Studies: Exploring Concepts and Approaches, ed. Kitty Zijlmans and Wilfried van
Damme (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2008), pp. 167-182; ibid., “Art and the Church in the Early
Modern Era: The Baltic in Comparative Perspective” in Art and the Church: Religious
Art and Architecture in the Baltic Region in the 13th-18th centuries. Conference dedicated
to the centenary of Sten I. Karling in Tallinn, Sept. 6-9 2006, ed. Krista Kodres and
Merike Kurisoo (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstiakadeemia, 2008), pp. 20-40; and Katarzyna
Murawska-Muthesius, “Introduction: geography of art, or bordering the Other?” in
Borders in Art: Revisiting Kunstgeographie, ed. Murawska-Muthesius (Warsaw:
57 See Kaufmann, “Introduction,” in Toward a Geography of Art, pp. 1-13 for a general
introduction to the topic; and ibid., “Early Modern Ideas about Artistic Geography
Related to the Baltic Region,” p. 264.
meanings in the twentieth century. As Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann summarizes: “the Baltic has been both a point of origin and a testing ground for a wide variety of theories that have had greater purport for treatments of the geography and the history of art.”

The concept of the Baltic as an artistic region dates back to the nascence of German nationalism and the purported supremacy of all things German. In short, *Kunstgeographie* sought to unify the Baltic region divided over several nation states, languages, and cultural traditions.

The notion of the Baltic as an artistic region came into focus in the early twentieth century through Johnny Roosval. In his 1927 essay entitled “Das baltisch-nordische Kunstgebiet,” Roosval defined “the Baltic North” (*der baltische Norden, le Nord Baltique*) as an “artistic realm” (*artedominium*) with overlapping regions. According to Roosval, the *artedominium* of “the Baltic North” reached from the beginning of the twelfth century to the sixteenth century, with the discernable high points of Master Francke’s workshop in Hamburg and in Bernt Notke’s workshop in Lübeck across the fifteenth century. In particular, the major works by Notke in Stockholm, Århus, and Reval (Tallinn) stood as examples for a definitive artistic realm. As Finnish art historian Jan von Bonsdorff points out, Roosval’s *artedominium* fails to account for diffusion—that is, the movement of people, things, and ideas—in the development of the Baltic

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North.⁶¹ In other words, Roosval’s *artedominium* explains the existence of objects across the Baltic region, and not the cultural, social or economic motivations for the mobility of works of art throughout the *artedominium*.

In 1933 at an international art history conference in Stockholm, the concept of the Baltic as an artistic region was renewed again. While Roosval continued to emphasize the internationality of “the Baltic North,” in contrast, the German art historian Wilhelm Pinder (1878-1947) stressed the influence of Germany in the Baltic region: “the direction of this [Nordic] art is so one-sided radiating from Germany.”⁶² Throughout his career, Pinder championed German nationalism and German art, including his monumental studies on medieval German sculpture in 1924. According to Pinder, late-medieval German sculpture was a movement towards Albrecht Dürer and his generational contemporaries; therefore, it is unsurprising that Pinder would disagree with Roosval’s concept of “artistic realm” as independent of Germany and German artists.⁶³

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⁶³ Wilhelm Pinder, *Die deutsche Plastik des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1924); and ibid., *Die deutsche Plastik des vierzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1924). Pinder’s nationalism ultimately led him to accept party membership to National Socialism and to occupy the chair of art history at the University of Berlin in 1935.
Pinder drew upon the concept of the Baltic as German heritage, espoused by the so-called ‘father of Baltic History’, Wilhelm Neumann (1849-1919). Neumann, a German-born and Riga-based art historian, in his *700 Jahre baltischer Kunst* (1900) argues that itinerant German masters brought German art to the Baltic provinces. Neumann saw Baltic art as having its own charm, albeit of a lesser quality than German Gothic:

> Of course, whoever takes a superficial glimpse at this area might argue, with a pitying smile, that there never was a Baltic art. But whoever looks more closely, whoever is not led astray by the rough inconspicuous appearance and the wreckage, whoever examines the modest features lovingly and without bias will reach a different conclusion. Although compared with the marvels of the highest artistic creation in the former mother country, the art here does appear humble, like wild flowers by the path that leads to the neighbor’s rose garden. But wild flowers also have their charm.

The Baltic provinces, especially Estonia and Latvia, were seen through their connections to the German ‘motherland’—a colonial framework that occupied German nationalistic discourse in the first decades of the twentieth century through the Second World War. A similar trend also dominated Hanse historiography, as previously mentioned, and this

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65 Wilhelm Neumann, *700 Jahre baltischer Kunst* (Riga, 1900), see esp. p. 329.
stereotype was no different in the conceptualization of the Germanic expansion of the Baltic.

Jan Białostocki, in his 1976 article “The Baltic Area as an Artistic Region in Sixteenth Century,” attempts to free artistic geography of the Baltic from its nationalist chains. Białostocki writes:

One is therefore inclined to look behind general appearances and to trace graspable human connections, or local traditions focused around popular and highly appreciated artistic achievements, which furnished models and norms. History is not made by spirits and tendencies, but by people who decided about commissions, who gave money, but who also believed in ideas and their believes were sometimes factors more decisive in artistic developments than economic and geographic reasons.

Białostocki shifts the concept of artistic geography away from nationalism and toward the social and cultural explanations of artistic development. Alongside the contemporaneous impulse of the social history of art, art historians since Białostocki have turned to the Ostseeraum with renewed interest. After DaCosta Kaufmann, Michael North, and Jan van Bonsdorff, among others, studies on the Baltic region attend to artistic interactions in the late medieval and early modern era without being limited to national borders, languages, and styles.

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69 Białostocki, “The Baltic as Artistic Region.” p. 15.

To be sure, the consideration of the Baltic as an artistic region stems from earlier studies on the Mediterranean. Fernand Braudel’s tome on the Mediterranean, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1949), evaluated the intersection of history, politics, and culture through the connection of the Mediterranean Sea. Braudel used the physical geography of the Mediterranean basin to explain the rise and fall of civilizations in the region. The Baltic could never compete with the Mediterranean in terms of its historical importance in Western civilization, since Baltic towns were founded under the Teutonic Order in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries. Nonetheless, we can take Braudel’s approach to study a body of water and its connecting lands and apply to the medieval cities bordering or connected to the Baltic in order to frame the ideas, people, and art objects crossing the sea regularly.

In recent decades, art historical scholars have turned to the Mediterranean Sea as a way to transcend the geographical and temporal limits of the canon—a body of water where the interactions of multiple cultures and religions can be traced throughout in the ancient and medieval eras. Eva Hoffman’s edited volume on the Late Antique and

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Mediterranean Worlds offers an art historical model of mapping the sea based on cultural exchange and interactions.\textsuperscript{72} Similarly, David Abulafia has discussed the Mediterranean and “the way that objects and ideas moved across [the] space” as a crossroads of exchange.\textsuperscript{73} Such studies demonstrate how the Mediterranean clearly offers an artistic model for the Baltic region.

Michael North’s 2011 \textit{Geschichte der Ostsee: Handel und Kulturen}, recently translated into English in 2015 as \textit{The Baltic: A History}, marks the first comprehensive study on the Baltic from the Vikings to formation of the European Union.\textsuperscript{74} North views the Baltic in terms of the role of trade in fostering dynamic cross-cultural relationships across the sea. Additional studies like Michael Pye on the North Sea have further contributed to the \textit{longue durée} of the sea as concentrated sites of multicultural interactions through trade relationships transacted on water.\textsuperscript{75} Drawing upon these concepts of the Baltic as an artistic region, this study now focuses especially on the role of merchants in facilitating cultural transfer as one of the defining features of the artistic network of the Hanse in the Baltic Sea region.


\textsuperscript{74} North, \textit{The Baltic: A History}.

\textsuperscript{75} Michael Pye, \textit{The Edge of the World: A Cultural History of the North Sea and the Transformation of Europe} (Berkeley: Pegasus, 2015).
RECENT SCHOLARSHIP

In the twenty-first century several new art historical studies on medieval Lübeck art and workshops have been undertaken by a younger generation of German scholars. Book-length monographs on named artists include: Bernt Notke, Hermen Rode, Benedikt Dreyer, Hans Brüggemann, Claus Berg, and Hans Kemmer, among others, continuing Goldschmidt’s archival tradition. The regionally-specific studies on altarpieces in Rostock, Mecklenberg, and Lübeck panel painting also aid our understanding of the North German retable style and workshop traditions. It is worth mentioning that several of these aforementioned studies originated from the Deutscher Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) Project, “Corpus der mittelalterlichen Holzskulptur und Tafelmalerei in Schleswig Holstein, 1200-1535” (Corpus of Medieval Wooden Sculpture and Panel Painting in Schleswig Holstein, 1200-1535) at the Christian-Albrechts-Universität in Kiel. The Corpus Project has produced three volumes documenting art in Schleswig-Holstein, with


77 Katrin Wagner, Rostocker Retabelkunst im 15. Jahrhundert (Kiel: Ludwig, 2011); Julia Trinkert, Flügelretabel in Mecklenburg zwischen 1480 und 1540. Bestand Vertretung und Werkstattzusammenhänge (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2014); Miriam Hoffmann, Studien zur Lübecker Tafelmalerei von 1450 bis 1520 (Kiel: Ludwig, 2015). The methodologies in these studies, however, remain strictly archival and based on style and attribution.

78 Verknüpfung der Fachdisziplinen Kunstgeschichte, Denkmalpflege und Restaurierung, led by Prof. Dr. Uwe Albrecht.
the first two volumes dedicated to art in Lübeck at the St. Annen-Museum Collection (2009) and the city of Lübeck (Die Werke im Stadtgebiet, 2013).\textsuperscript{79}

The 2015 exhibition at the St. Annen-Museum, entitled “Lübeck um 1500: Kunstmetropole im Ostseeraum” framed Lübeck sacred arts at their zenith around the turn of the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{80} The scope of this exhibition is comparable to the French blockbuster exhibitions, which focused on a specific region or city during a period of artistic and civic flourishing, such as Strasbourg and Paris in 1400.\textsuperscript{81} The question remains, however, if circa 1500 can be considered the highpoint or year marking the great decline for local Lübeck artistic production. Above all, circa 1500 marked a transition point in Lübeck, when the last works from the Rode (d. c.1504) and Notke (d. 1509) workshops were completed, and the younger generation trained in those very workshops began to receive local commissions. Yet, as Jan von Bonsdorff has documented, based on the registered artisans in the Lübeck guilds, artistic production in Lübeck declined after 1500 [Fig. 3].\textsuperscript{82} More specifically, workshops peaked in 1490, and by 1531, when the Reformation fundamentally changed the patronage patterns of devotional altarpieces for


\textsuperscript{82} von Bonsdorff, Kunstproduktion und Kunstverbreitung, p. 45.
side altars in the city, the workshops were less than seven *Handwerke* in the city.\(^8\) Also at this time, Lübeck was the leading producer of carved wooden sculpture for the Baltic Sea region until around 1510.

The study of Lübeck art, as demonstrated in the above brief historiographic survey has continued to focus on specific materials and artists. In contrast, by placing emphasis on the collective nature of the Hanse and Lübeck urban life, this study can contribute new understanding to civic art in the late-medieval trade city.

**THE NATURE OF LÜBECK ALTARPIECES**

One of the main claims of this dissertation is that the Lübeck standard altarpiece became the principal artistic form produced and commissioned in Pre-Reformation Lübeck.\(^8\) The altarpieces made in Lübeck workshops from ca. 1400 to 1530 took on a distinct, multimedia combination of painting, polychromed sculpture and double-wings [Fig. 4]. The closed view shows the altarpiece with both pairs of wings closed (*Werktagsseite*). In accordance to the Lübeck standard, the first opening, or second view, unveils a painting cycle arranged in a grid (*Sontagsseite*). The second opening or third view opens the altarpiece to the shrine, *corpus* or festive view, with both sets of wings


\(^8\) The majority of altarpieces in this dissertation are from the St. Annen-Museum Collection. Lübeck did not have iconoclastic reaction to Reformation in the city like in the Netherlands. Most altarpieces were transferred to the St. Annen-Museum in 1911.
open (Fettagsseite). Unique to northern Germany and taken up by Lübeck workshops in the fifteenth century, this final view features a carved corpus and carved wings. Viewing and opening the corpus were controlled similarly.85 In Lübeck, the everyday view was typically the second painted view, reserving the corpus and closed views for feast days and the specific devotional needs of the group to whom the altarpiece belonged.

Indeed, some of the earliest extant altarpieces to take the form of sculpted wings and corpus, and are found exclusively in northern Germany and in the Baltic. Dating from the fourteenth century, the extant early examples stem from the northern German region, including Cismar (c. 1320, Cismar Kloster) and Bad Doberan (c. 1300-1350, Doberan Minster), and Lüneburg (Goldene Tafel, c. 1400, Landesmuseum, Hanover).86 Master Bertram’s Grabower Altarpiece [finished 1379-83, Hamburg Kunsthalle, Fig. 5] and Master Francke’s St. Barbara Altarpiece [c. 1420, National Museum of Finland, Helsinki, Fig. 6] further demonstrate that the original locations of large, carved, double-winged reredos were not only geographically proximate to Lübeck, but often were products of Lübeck workshops. Master Bertram’s northern German retable was attributed

to a workshop in Lübeck until 1900, and the carvings from Master Francke’s *St. Barbara Altarpiece* were likely made in Lübeck. The format of these aforementioned altarpieces, the low-wide, horizontal shrine, would dominate Lübeck local production for the fifteenth century.

By the fifteenth century, altarpieces in the region had standardized to include a multimedia display of devotion with double openings—that is two sets of doors—with a combination of painting and polychromed sculpture. In accordance with the Lübeck standard retable form, single or multiple registers of individually carved saints or simple narrative scenes are framed by various decorative elements, including pointed gable arcades and thinly carved tracery. Architectural ornament in Lübeck serves to frame the saints or scenes and does not become an independent focal point. The predella is typically painted in the first and second views, sometimes opening to a carved scene below the *corpus* on the final, festive view.

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88 According to Lynn F. Jacobs, most double-winged retables were exported to Germany and Scandinavia, so this format appealed to specific German tastes. In *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces, 1380-1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 97; and ibid., *Opening Doors*, p. 157-158.

89 See Chapter Three for a discussion on the painted predella in the work of Hermen Rode in particular.
In the late-medieval era, the altarpiece, or altar retable, was one of the most important church furnishings installed in the high altar, side altar, and private chapels in countless churches across Europe. The function of the late-medieval altarpiece varied—clergy use, personal piety, and direct sponsorship for commemorative and/or funerary functions.  

It is generally assumed that the altarpiece form with a predella, shrine and wings derives from reliquary cabinets, which featured moveable wings in order to house shrines. The zenith of altarpiece production in northern Europe, especially in the Netherlands and Germany, dates to the last decades of the fourteenth century up to the Reformation. By the sixteenth century, the altarpiece took several structural forms: painted triptychs, carved altarpieces (*Schnitzaltäre*), as well as different combinations of painting and sculpture.

The altarpiece was a ubiquitous art form in northern European cities in the fifteenth century, but also regionally varied. Nonetheless, the regionally distinct Lübeck retable is rarely used as an example in late Gothic surveys. Rather, southern German

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90 Henk van Os, “Some Thoughts on Writing a History of Sienese Altarpieces” in The Altarpiece and the Renaissance, ed. Peter Humfrey and Martin Kemp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 21-33; and ibid., The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe, 1300-1500 (London: Merrel Holberton, 1994).

91 Most common interpretation is that Netherlandish carved altar derived from German sculpted altarpieces. See Jacobs, Early Netherlandish Altarpieces, p. 12; and Hasse, Der Flügelaltar, pp. 11-14. Ehresmann disagrees with the reliquary cupboard theory, in “Some Observations on the Role of Liturgy in the Early Winged Altarpiece,” pp. 359-369.

Schnitzaltäre from Swabia, Tirol, Bavaria, Franconia, and the Middle and Upper Rhine are used as prime examples of what defines the late Gothic in Germany. In particular, the artistic hands and workshops of Veit Stoss, Michael Pacher, and Tilman Riemenschneider serve as textbook examples of envisioning the late Gothic.\footnote{Michael Baxandall leaves out Bernt Notke, for example, in Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980). See also Tilman Riemenschneider: Master Sculptor of the late Middle Ages, ed. Julien Chapuis, exh. cat National Gallery of Art (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1999); Lukas Madersbacher, Michael Pacher: Zwischen Zeiten und Raumen (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2015), among many others.} There is also an important difference in material, of course—limewood was used in the south, rather than oak in the north.\footnote{Lübeck guilds stipulated the use of oak. See Chapter Two for a discussion on the Lübeck guilds and local altarpiece production.} Most significantly, paint and gold are never abandoned in Lübeck—a development which is often taken as the climactic narrative for late Gothic sculpture in southern Germany.

The format of the southern German late Gothic altarpiece also remained unpopular in Lübeck. The southern German altarpiece often contains a polychromed or unpolychromed corpus with oversized, iconic figures and a massive, vertical crown of tracery as the superstructure. The emphasis in southern German works is thus placed on verticality, not horizontality, whereas Lübeck altarpieces remain squat and uniformly compartmentalized with multi-figured scenes to aid devotion. Certainly there are outliers,
but the overall shape of the Lübeck altarpiece retains sharp ninety-degree angles in the edges of its *corpus*, not elaborate superstructures like in South Germany.

Another regionally distinct altarpiece form originates from the southern Netherlands. 95 The southern Netherlandish carved altarpiece typically featured a carved and polychromed shrine from Baltic oak fitted with one set of painted wings. Rogier van der Weyden, for instance, illustrates the typical southern Netherlandish altarpiece in the center of the middle panel of the *Seven Sacraments Altarpiece* [Fig. 7, 1445-50, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp]. Rogier’s altarpiece features a single register of saints individually framed in thin tracery baldachins; atop the *corpus* is a Madonna and Child Enthroned, encased by painted panels and an enormous crown of tracery. 96 This painted image of a contemporary carved altarpiece shows the altarpiece *in situ*, surrounded by similarly carved stone and tracery work in the rood screen, the Church vaulting, and the windows. The contemporaneous altarpieces from Lübeck do not structurally resemble the

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carved shrine in Rogier’s painted panel, because Rogier paints a structural format of retables endemic to the southern Netherlands with an inverted T-shape.

Workshops in the Brabantine cities of Brussels, Antwerp, and Mechelen served as the major producers of southern Netherlandish retables. Each city further specialized in retable forms: Brabantine workshops were known for their inverted T-shaped corpus, whereas Antwerp altarpieces are readily identifiable from their bell-shaped shrine, as well as the hand for carved workers marking the Guild of St. Luke [Fig. 8].

Lynn Jacobs has argued that many of the southern Netherlandish retables were made for the open market, in which the repetition and popularity of specific narrative scenes indicates a regional standardization in altarpiece production. For these reasons, Passion and Marian iconography dominated the Netherlandish standard.

The marketplace for altarpieces also extended to the Rhineland in Germany, where 200 Antwerp altarpieces have survived, in which thirty remain in their original setting. To be clear, the Lübeck standard altarpiece indicates conformity in shape and

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format, and not standardization for the open marketplace like Netherlandish retables. Few altarpieces in Lübeck from the fifteenth century were made outside the city: most notably, the *Gronau Altarpiece* [Fig. 9, St. Annen-Museum], attributed to a Bruges workshop, and the *Antwerp Retable from 1518* [Fig. 10, St. Marienkirche]. Compared to the high number of Antwerp altarpieces in the Rhineland, and also later in Scandinavia and the Baltic after the 1520s, the number of non-local altarpieces in the city remained unusually low for a region connected through trade. While the Netherlandish altarpiece enjoyed popularity in German-speaking lands, Lübeck merchants and patrons nonetheless continued to support local workshops, making retables conforming to the Lübeck standard. Furthermore, there is no evidence for southern German retables in Lübeck. However, Lübeck wood carvers and painters certainly had contact with Netherlandish and southern German workshops, either from the *Wanderjahre* or through circulating woodcuts and engravings; however, such connections remain tentative.¹⁰⁰

Lübeck workshops produced the majority of local altarpieces, and moreover, these altarpieces were made to order for collective urban merchant groups. The city’s mercantile elite, who were also the ruling patrician class in the free imperial city, organized themselves into corporate groups, confraternities, and guilds, for which altarpiece sponsorship became a leading group activity. Therefore, Lübeck altarpieces were distinct in their form, but also in their pattern of patronage: mercantile urban groups desired works and altarpieces from Lübeck workshops, which were made on commission,

¹⁰⁰ For example, Benedikt Dreyer likely trained in southern Germany based on his style of woodcarvings in his Lübeck workshop. See Thiesen, *Benedikt Dreyer*, pp. 15-19.
catering specifically to meet the needs of patron groups. In this regard, the collective patronage of Lübeck altarpieces parallels the collective nature of the Hanse itself: the dual function of the Hanse as a collective of towns and merchants is epitomized in the collective, merchant altarpieces in the city.

In addition to the Lübeck standard format and the collective enterprises of the buyers and users of altarpieces, the third distinct component of the Lübeck altarpiece addressed in this study involves cultural transfer. Lübeck manufactured a structurally and stylistically different type of altarpiece, which was also culturally transferred to sister Hanse trade cities in north Germany, as well as to Norway, Sweden, and Estonia. The clerical and mercantile patrons across the Baltic in Livonia and Scandinavia turned to Lübeck workshops to furnish their devotional spaces. As Scandinavian art historians Jan von Bonsdorff and Aron Andersson have argued, the proliferation of carved oak retables throughout Scandinavia continually points to Lübeck workshops. Moreover, the exported altarpieces conform to the Lübeck standard, featuring a rectangular corpus that lacks the vertical crowned tracery, and often includes single rows of saints adapted to local context, such as the Scandinavian Saints Bridget, Erik, and Olaf. As will be discussed throughout this dissertation, the Lübeck standard altarpiece is adopted and adapted form across the Baltic into Scandinavia.

GOALS AND CHAPTER DESCRIPTIONS

Following the structure of the Hanse as a collective of merchants and towns, the production and use of art in fifteenth-century Lübeck operated in communal terms. The principal goal of this dissertation is to show how Lübeck, through commissioned altarpieces, processions, and locally produced city views, enacted sites of civic and mercantile self-consciousness. The three chapters address trade pathways to and from Lübeck and the decisive role that the city played in artistic production throughout the Hanse region in the fifteenth century. It is worth mentioning that this study provides neither a comprehensive survey nor catalogue of art and monuments in Lübeck in the fifteenth century. Rather, I use both the urban image and the altarpiece as models for artistic transactions in the Hanse trade network to investigate how Hanse trade provided a framework for the production and mobility of art locally and extraterritorially. Accordingly, this dissertation unfolds like an altarpiece itself, unveiling the interwoven relationships between geography, mercantile and civic identity.

The first chapter, *The Painted and Printed Image of Lübeck* examines the urban image of Lübeck in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century painted and printed city views. I argue that the urban shape of Lübeck, as represented in the background of painted wall panels and altarpieces, attests to the city’s mercantile livelihood and its artistic interactions across the North and Baltic Seas. Lübeck-based artists, such as Bernt Notke, Hermen Rode, and Elias Diebel, modified the profile of their local cityscape to construct a self-image of Lübeck as an economically stable, free imperial city. This first chapter provides a bird’s-eye view, so to speak, of Lübeck’s self-image as a trade city, whereas
the two following chapters assess the ground-level production and circulation of works of art in and out of urban Lübeck.

The second chapter, entitled *Merchant Altarpieces in Lübeck*, turns to the local sponsorship and use of altarpieces by urban merchant groups. Lübeck’s late-medieval community was socially organized into mercantile and civic companies, confraternities, and guilds, including the Circle Society (*Zirkelgesellschaft*), Merchants Corporation (*Kaufleute-Kompanie*), Corpus Christi Confraternity (*Fronleichnamsbruderschaft*), and Traders from Bergen, Norway (*Bergenfahrer*), among others. These groups transformed their trade capital to facilitate communal gatherings, civic ritual, and altarpiece production in fifteenth-century Lübeck. I interpret these altarpieces as a form of collective group identity and as a way to trace long-distance knowledge and activities by their patrons and users—the Hanse merchants of Lübeck. This chapter looks at the local relationship of Lübeck merchant groups, whereas the following chapter examines the extended network of merchants outside Lübeck.

The third chapter, *Pathways at Sea: Bruges-Lübeck-Reval*, studies Hanse merchants living outside Lübeck who facilitated cultural transfer through trade relations. Lübeck’s strongest artistic networks connected the city to Hanse nodal cities across the North and Baltic Seas: westward to Bruges—where Lübeck Hanse merchants were known as the *Oosterlingen* (Easterners)—and eastward to Reval (Tallinn). Hanse merchants in both Lübeck and Reval commissioned prestigious altarpieces from Flemish workshops destined for their hometowns. Furthermore, Hanse merchants and urban trade groups in Reval also turned to Lübeck to furnish their mercantile spaces: the merchant
brotherhoods in Reval, such as the Brotherhood of the Black Heads (*Bruderschaft der Schwarzhäupter*) and the Great Guild of Merchants (*Große Gilde*), commissioned both Lübeck and Flemish workshops to outfit their private chapels. This chapter explores this extraterritorial Hanse artistic network, specifically, how Hanse merchants acted as consumers and mediators in the transfer, or mobility, of altarpieces.

The Conclusion of this study, *Nodal Shifts*, turns to the decade of the 1530s to discuss the decline of Lübeck as the leading city for artistic transactions in the Hanse. Lübeck’s decline is due to three significant changes: the waning of the Hanse, the Reformation in the city in 1531, and the subsequent displacement of altarpieces and disbanding of mercantile urban groups. Undoubtedly, Lübeck in the fifteenth-century witnessed unparalleled artistic and economic prosperity. For the mercantile patricians and burghers in Lübeck, the city provided pride of place: a place to call home that enjoyed a prosperous commercial and artistic industry connected to other trade cities across the wider Hanse region and northern Europe.
CHAPTER ONE

THE PAINTED AND PRINTED IMAGE OF LÜBECK

INTRODUCTION

Aenas Silvius, the future Pope Pius II, described Lübeck in his 1458 Germania:

Among all the cities, Lübeck stands out, because it is dotted with beautiful buildings and richly ornamented churches. The authority of the city is such that with a single nod it can install or depose the rulers of the mighty kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.  

During the fifteenth century, Lübeck stood as one of the most powerful cities in the Baltic region. The monuments from the medieval period—Lübeck’s greatest heritage—have become synonymous for its enduring egalitarian spirit and civic pride. To be sure, Lübeck retained this image of power and beauty into the modern day. For instance, Thomas Mann set his 1901 novel Buddenbrooks in his hometown of Lübeck, in which the author frequently describes the late medieval city without explicitly identifying Lübeck by name. In place of naming Lübeck, Mann characterizes the city through specific “old monuments out of our great period,” especially the “medieval sights of

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103 “die Denkmäler aus unserer großen Zeit” in Thomas Mann, Buddenbrooks: Verfall einer Familie, 1901 (Frankfurt am Main: Fisher Verlag, 2013), p. 361. Translated into
the town—the churches, the gates, the fountains, the market, the town hall, the Seaman’s Guild.”

Mann casts Lübeck’s legacy and identity back to the medieval past, when Lübeck profited from the Hanse trading network as a flourishing mercantile city. At that time, Lübeck was the most important trade city in Baltic Sea commerce. Indeed, both medieval and modern Lübeckers have conceptualized their home city in similar terms: a spiritual, patrician-run, and economically stable Hansestadt. In the fifteenth century, Lübeck certainly celebrated the appellation of “Head of the Hanse,” and was praised as “Lübeck, most beautiful of all cities/ yours is the crown of the great glory.”

The idea of civic and mercantile Lübeck is explored both materialistically and conceptually in this chapter. The subject of this chapter is the medieval city of Lübeck: how Lübeck defined and branded itself in painted and printed city views as a free imperial and Hanse trade city. Such city views are not pre-modern photographs, but are constructed cartographic images, which offer us insight into how Lübeck citizens saw themselves and their place in the physical world. More specifically, Lübeck’s painted and

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printed city views will be investigated to examine how urban representations of Lübeck communicate civic ideals of the patrician and mercantile elite classes.

Lübeck’s dual status as a Hanse trade and free imperial city distinctly positioned the city over other medieval German urban centers, as well as other trade cities across the Baltic and Northern Seas. The medieval city, according to Edith Ennen, was a “compact silhouette… densely built up, surrounded by a wall, dominated by churches and its fortress.”¹⁰⁷ Northern European medieval towns and cities shared specific topographic characteristics and features, such as walls for protection, gates for transit, civic spaces, market places, and churches for worship. Yet, according to Fritz Rörig, Lübeck was an exception to Ennen’s canonical definition of the medieval city: because of the city’s long-distance trade networks, Lübeck was not self-contained.¹⁰⁸ In other words, Lübeck is a city demarcated by riverine and built boundaries, but it is also a place that is connected to its network outside the city walls. In short, medieval Lübeck was highly self-conscious as a place of trade and commerce. Above all, Lübeck fashioned herself as the Queen of the Hanse, and the city’s urban representations represent this status quite explicitly: the long-distance Hanseatic trade was the basis of Lübeck’s urban life, its livelihood, as well as its topography.

In addition to the city’s special position as an influential trade city, Lübeck was a free imperial city, meaning that it held allegiance to neither church nor crown. Lübeck

was granted the status of an imperial city (*civitas imperii*) by Emperor Frederick II in 1226, indicating that the city was not controlled by a ruler from the region, but answered directly to the Holy Roman Emperor. Except for seven years during the Napoleonic wars, Lübeck remained a free imperial city until 1937, when it was annexed to Schleswig-Holstein. As a result, Lübeck citizens were relatively autonomous and responsible for themselves: the city leaders formed a city council, were free to decide on their own internal affairs, and also had the right to defend itself. Its governing body, the city council, the majority of whom were merchants, thus controlled Lübeck. There were twenty-four city councilors, generally composed of the citizens with the greatest economic and political influence—and for this maritime city, influence became synonymous with the trade activities of long-distance merchants.

Accordingly, Lübeck is comparatively more similar socially and culturally to Italian republican city-states, like Venice, and cities in the Low Countries, like Ghent and Bruges, rather than cities comparable in size throughout the Holy Roman Empire at the time. Lübeck patricians controlled their own local government, and the same civic leaders also commanded local Hanse trade. Thus, Lübeck asserted its civic identity by drawing on both its leadership status within a wider trade network and its local municipal body. That is to say, in painted and printed urban representations, Lübeck’s dual status as a free-imperial and trade city is continually emphasized.
Contemporary Lübeck still retains its medieval spirit through its Gothic brick architecture monuments and urban topography. The city’s medieval identity is further promoted through its UNESCO World Heritage status. Lübeck forms an island shaped like an almond, measuring roughly 1750 meters from north to south and 1125 meters from east to west [Fig. 1.1]. The island is surrounded by the River Trave—which connects the city to the Baltic Sea—and the Wakenitz Canal, forming a natural moat. Today, when disembarking on the train from the railstation, one enters the city through Holstentor (Holsten Gate)—a two towered monumental gate with alternating bands of glazed brick and red tiles. The Holsten Gate was built from 1469-78, and after centuries of use and wear, the towers now sit significantly lower than the modern pavement. Hanse merchants taking the inland route from Hamburg would have entered through the Holstentor. The inscription on the gate, CONCORDIA DOMI FORIS PAX (Harmony within, peace without) was added in the nineteenth century, and stands as another example of Lübeck appropriating its medieval heritage in the modern era.109

In its profile, the city forms an elevated shape, or as one sixteenth-century traveler remarked, a tortoise shell in profile.110 Lübeck’s skyline is punctuated by the towers belonging to its beloved religious monuments: the Cathedral (3), St. Peter Church (7), St. Giles Church (5), St. John Cloister (6), St. Mary Church (9), St. Catherine Church &

109 Holstentor was also represented on the German Federal Republic’s currency from 1960 to 1991.
Cloister (10), and St. Jacob Church (11) [Fig. 1.2]. The island slopes upward toward the center of the town, where the city’s most esteemed landmarks are located: St. Mary Church (*St. Marienkirche*), the city’s patrician church, the Town Hall (8, *Rathaus*), and the main market square. The most densely built streets, Königstraße and Breite Straße, run along the north-south axis. The island slopes upward again at the north side, which once held the castle of Count Adolf von Schauenburg, built in 1143.

The entire island was built up by the sixteenth century. The oldest religious foundations are located near the Cathedral, on the south end of the island. Henry the Lion laid the foundation stone of the Cathedral in 1173 and granted protection privileges over the city. In 1188, Frederick Barbarossa ratified trade protection over Lübeck, and officially granted the city free imperial status in 1226. After the Battle of Bornhöved against Danish rule in 1227, town walls and four town gates were erected, and the castle of Count Adolf von Schauenburg was destroyed to demonstrate the city’s new freedom symbolically. In its place, the Castle Friary and Church of the Benedictines (13, *Burgkirche und- kloster*) were founded in 1229 and dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene; the city’s corporate guilds and fraternities including the Corpus Christi Confraternity (*Fronleichnamsbruderschaft*), St. Anthony Brotherhood (*Antonius-Bruderschaft*) and St.

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111 The numbers after the monuments correlate to their identification in subsequent city views in this chapter. The double spires of the Cathedral and St. Mary Church and the single tower of St. Peter were destroyed in the Second World War, but they all have since been rebuilt. Absent from this modern list is the Castle Friary Church and Cloister (13), which was one of the most important religious institutions in medieval Lübeck, but was demolished in the nineteenth century.

Leonhard Brotherhood (Leonhards-Bruderschaft) used this space for their private dedicated chapels.\textsuperscript{113} Despite its new-found civic and confraternal function, the Castle still retained its courtly name, as well as the Burgtor, the Castle Gate (15, 16), which directs traffic going northwards out of the city. Today the old site of the Castle Friary hosts the new European Hanse Museum (Europäisches Hansemuseum).

In the thirteenth century construction further continued for religious foundations across the city. In 1225, the Franciscan monastery of St. Catherine (Katharinenkirche) was built, which would later hold the chapel of the city’s most exclusive urban corporate, the Circle Society (Zirkelgesellschaft). St. John Convent (St. Johannis), under Benedictine rule and run by Cistercian nuns, also has an early foundation of 1245. The almshouse, the Holy Ghost Hospital (12, Heiligen-Geist-Hospital) started construction in 1280. Also at this time, the Town Hall (Rathaus) began construction at its current site, at the heart of the city and at the city’s highest point. The Town Hall adjoins St. Mary to the north end and the main town market to the south. These three landmarks served as the foci of Lübeck corporate life and as emblems of civic pride in Lübeck, and were likely the location of civic-sponsored plays and performances.\textsuperscript{114}

\textsuperscript{113} See Chapter Two for these merchant urban groups in the Burgkloster.

Lübeck’s Town Hall in present form was not how it originally looked in the Middle Ages. Like most monuments that were imbued with deep civic pride, the Lübeck Town Hall was expanded, modified, and updated between its thirteenth-century foundations and the sixteenth century. The oldest part of the structure is its early-Gothic south wall. Adjoining it on the south side is the Long House (formerly called Danzelhus), built between 1298-1308, and the New Chamber was built in 1442-44. Mann describes the Town Hall in Buddenbrooks:

with its trace work of glazed tiles, the tapering towers and turrets silhouetted against the whitish gray sky, its covered staircase supported by projecting columns, its arcades whose pointed arches reveal a view of the market square and its fountain.

In Mann’s novel, and in medieval Lübeck, the Town Hall was the center of civic power and aristocratic authority. If Lübeck was the symbolic center of the Hanse, then the St. Mary Church, the Town Hall, and the Lübeck Market sat at the heart of the entire Hanseatic Region (Hanseraum).

In the fourteenth century the main churches, St. Mary, St. Jacob, St. Peter, the Cathedral, and St. Giles were rebuilt in the contemporary Gothic brick style. The architectural monuments in Lübeck, such as churches, town walls, high gates, belfries, Boone and Peter Stabel, Studies in Urban Social, Economic and Political History of the Medieval and Modern Low Countries (Leuven: Garant, 2000), p. 44.


and houses also function as visual reminders of the power of the city.\textsuperscript{117} The city and its monuments appear uniform, partly due to the material consistency of the city. The urban fabric of Lübeck is entirely comprised of brick: all of the seven churches, the city hall, the gates, and streets are red brick. Brick was a source of urban pride for the city, but it also became a signature style of Lübeck and was used to design and build other Hanse cities across the Baltic Sea. Brick was used in part because the southern Baltic region lacked access to stone quarries. In other words, brick architecture not only embodied the Lübeck’s architectural identity, but also the wider northern German Hanse region, also known as \textit{Backsteingebiet}. The largest northern German coastal towns connected to Lübeck through the Hanse network—Greifswald, Lüneburg, Rostock, Stralsund, and Wismar—were also brick-built cities. Thus, \textit{Backsteingotik} stood as a unified symbol of the North German Wendish ports of the Hanseatic League.

St. Mary Church is undoubtedly the largest and most important structure in Lübeck. St. Mary Church, like many other churches in Hanse cities, was a site for worship but also for communal gatherings and civic events. St. Mary Church became home to some of the city’s most prestigious confraternities and urban groups, including the Traders from Bergen (\textit{Bergenfahrer}) and Scania (\textit{Schonenfahrer}). Even today, the dominating twin spires are visible from the train station and from all points on the water surrounding the island. St. Mary Church is a place of pride for the city, which is evident

in its great size, which was meant to compete with the seat of the bishop at the Cathedral. The original foundation of St. Mary Church dates to ca. 1200, when the city council commissioned a Romanesque basilica to rival the size, style, and importance of the Cathedral. After the thirteenth century, St. Mary Church was expanded in three additional building campaigns to modernize in the new Gothic style: first a hall church style derived from Westphalia, and then a three-aisled basilica in the French form. Finally, the spires were completed in 1350, and rebuilt shortly after their destruction in 1942.

Simply put, Lübeck’s St. Mary Church was the people’s church. Moreover, St. Mary Church in Lübeck served as a prototype in both plan and brick style for mercantile, patrician churches throughout the Hanse region. Merchant groups in Hanse cities founded churches in the Backsteingotik style: Cloister Church in Bad Doberan, St. Nicholas in Lüneburg, St. Nicholas in Stralsund, St. Nicholas in Reval, St. Mary in Rostock, and St. Nicholas in Wismar were all modeled after St. Mary Church in Lübeck in style, material, scale, and plan. Moreover, St. Mary Church was also culturally emulated: such

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patrician-controlled churches across Hanse cities in the Baltic region also housed urban and merchant confraternity chapels and civic-commissioned works of art. Thus, these churches similarly functioned as the centers of civic, commercial, and corporate life.

From the main market square, Town Hall, and St. Mary Church a sloping gradient leads to the Trave River, where the major shipping vessels would dock and unload; that area contained the most important merchant homes and trading houses of Hanse merchants. Merchant townhouses, articulated by elaborate brick gabled fronts, are scattered throughout the city. Merchants were allotted eight meters for the façade and thirty meters deep for living or working spaces. Typically the merchant houses consisted of a large, high, single room on the ground floor, with a vaulted cellar below.


and storage lofts above for bulk goods. Merchant homes and trading houses took the form of high, stepped façades punctuated by windows; this style became synonymous with trade cities, particular Hanse cities, as merchants houses throughout the North and Baltic Seas were also built in a similar style.

The spatial turn in the discipline of urban history gives us new insight into how space was used, thought of, and represented in Lübeck. In particular, Henri Lefebvre recognized that not only space is produced, but space is also a multivalent concept—that is, space is perceived, conceived, or represented. The latter concept, representational space, is a tool for constructing and expressing urban identity and civic social relations. So, how period artists represent space, topography and monuments of Lübeck reveal specific urban corporate ideologies, such as how mercantile and urban space was thought of, used, distinguished, and associated with local identity in the late medieval trade city.

In short, the representations of urban Lübeck propagate civic and mercantile values in capturing the physical elements of the city without absolute likeness.\textsuperscript{128}

**PAINTED LÜBECK**

The earliest city view of Lübeck served as the background in a *Dance of Death* panel painting installed in the city’s main patrician church, St. Mary (St. Marienkirche). The attributed artist, Bernt Notke (ca. 1440-1508) and his workshop, painted a profile view of the city from the northeast along the Wakenitz Canal [Fig. 1.3]. Several spires are prominently shown to designate the city’s identifiable and beloved monuments: the Mill Gate (1), Imperial Gate (2), the Cathedral (3), St Giles (5), St. John Cloister (6), St. Peter (7), Town Hall (8), St. Mary (9), St. Catherine (10), St. Jacob (11), Holy Ghost Hospital (12), Castle Friary (12), Castle Friary Cloister (13) and Castle Gates (15, 16) [Fig. 1.4].

The view of Lübeck in Notke’s work was only a small portion of the painted panel, since the primary subject matter was the Dance of Death. The Dance of Death, also known as *Totentanz* and *Dance macabre*, was a literary and pictorial theme in late-medieval Europe.\textsuperscript{129} The Lübeck *Dance of Death*, however, transformed the conventional iconography of the medieval moral tale that death comes to all to include in the background an urban and maritime panorama of Lübeck. This work on oak panels


\textsuperscript{129} On the role of the *Dance of Death* in wider medieval visual culture, see Elina Gertsman, *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages: Image, Text, Performance* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).
featured forty-seven figures, alternating skeletons and social types who engage in the medieval Dance of Death. The panel painting in situ stretched 26 x 1.9 meters across five walls to fit the shape of the Confessional Chapel (Beichtkapelle) in the north transept of St. Mary [Fig. 1.5]. The fifteenth-century viewer would have been able to circumambulate around the walls of the chapel to interact with the oversized panels and identify the individual dead and dancing figures by the texts at their feet.\textsuperscript{130} The profile of Lübeck is located behind these specific figure types, from right to left: the Mayor (Burgermeister), Cathedral Canon (Domherr), Burgher, Aristocrat (Edelmann) and Doctor (Artz).\textsuperscript{131} The Merchant (Kaufmann) was placed in front of the harbor with ships in the background, and thus, outside the included cityscape view. The verses accompanying the text praise the Mayor and Kaufmann, and criticize other occupations, such as the Emperor. Accordingly, it is assumed that the painting suggests mercantile elite patrons.\textsuperscript{132}

Notke—a local artist—offers a view of the city to his hometown that asserts the city’s prominence in this moral tale. Notke’s inclusion of Lübeck in this painted narrative reinforced the immediacy of the mortal tale to bring home the message to a local audience: death is an equalizer. It is easy to imagine the powerful impact of visually

\textsuperscript{131} Character types in order: Pope, King, Queen, Cardinal, King, Bishop, Abbott, Knight, Carthusian, Major, Canon, Nobleman, Doctor, Usurer, Curate, Merchant, Parish clerk, Craftsman, Hermit, Peasant, Youth, Maiden, and Baby.
pairing an image of one’s hometown with death. The Lübeck *Dance of Death* panel has been examined in scholarship for its *Dance macabre* iconography, text, and image sources, and attempts have been made to identify the hand of the attributed artist, Bernt Notke.\(^{133}\) However, all these inquiries fail to address the cultural and pictorial significance of including a painted view of Lübeck in the background of the *Dance of Death*. In short, why did a local artist include an identifiable cityscape of Lübeck in an oversized panel painting in Lübeck’s most important merchant and patrician church? What was the meaning, context, and use of Notke’s painted urban image of Lübeck?

This work was certainly one of the oldest painted topographic urban views of any contemporary German city. The inclusion of a Lübeck cityscape in Notke’s *Dance of Death* is often interpreted as an “accurate” landscape, since the represented physical structures resemble identifiable architectural monuments and topographic elements local to Lübeck.\(^ {134}\) However, Notke modified the cityscape to place emphasis on specific monuments, especially St. Mary Church. The composition is structured around the centrality of St. Mary (9), where the panel was housed. Standing at the northeast vantage point on the Falken peninsula, it is impossible to see all the represented monuments in the painted city view, so the artist condensed signature monuments located on the southern


\(^{134}\) Gertsmann describes the Lübeck landscape as “accurate.” In *The Dance of Death*, p. 105. The same author also identifies monuments in the landscape as “the medium-size building with a tongs-shaped ornament on its red roof.” Ibid., p. 106.
end of the island—the Mill Gate (1), the Imperial Gate (2), the Cathedral (3), and St. Giles (5)—to be on axis with St. Mary. This visual distortion relocates these monuments to fit into the view with legible intervals between them. In reality, the monuments on the southern end of the island could not be seen from the northeast vantage point on the Falken peninsula [Fig. 1.6]. As a result of this spatial condensing, the twin spires of St. Mary Church dominate over the cityscape. Thus, Notke’s urban image does not correspond with existing architecture and topography but is manipulated to emphasize the Mary Church.

Moreover, these manipulated architectural monuments and topographic elements in Notke’s city view reinforce patrician ideologies of the city. For example, the artistic decision to represent Lübeck from the northeast vantage point displaced the Cathedral (3) from the center composition. The Cathedral held the seat of the bishop, whereas the mercantile population of the city-controlled St. Mary Church. Accordingly, the chosen view from the northeast and the pictorial relocation of specific monuments meant that nothing could compete with or obstruct the view of St. Mary Church. If the representational viewpoint came from a different direction, such as the north, west, or south, the represented distance between the Cathedral and St. Mary would collapse considerably. Most significantly, picturing Lübeck from the northeast on the Falken peninsula—first seen in the Dance of Death painting in Lübeck—became the viewing position to represent the topographic profile of the city.

Notke’s painted panel poses significant challenges to the study of pictorial representations of urban Lübeck. First, Notke’s work is no longer extant. The Dance of
Death panel painting was destroyed by the Royal Air Force bombing of the port city in spring 1942. The work is preserved today only through the prewar black and white documentary photography by Lübeck local photographer Wilhelm Castelli. Second, Castelli’s photographs document the Baroque copy of the late-medieval painting and not the fifteenth-century original. Painter Anton Wortmann copied the deteriorating original onto canvas in 1701 with supposedly minor modifications to the image. Thus, until evidence proves otherwise, it seems likely that the Lübeck landscape remained the same between the Notke and Wortmann versions. Third, the attribution of the artist and dating of the original fifteenth-century panel is still contested. The inscription stated 1463 as the work’s completion date, but it is more probable that the work was finished after the plague hit Lübeck in 1464. Lübeck pastor-turned-cultural historian Jakob Melle first attributed Lübeck’s Dance of Death to the local artist Bernt Notke based on style and on

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136 Changes made include replacing the fifteenth century ships with seventeenth century models, as well as updated verses from Mittelniederdeutsch to modern German in the text by Nathanael Schlott. See Kerstin Petermann, Bernt Notke: Arbeitsweise und Werkstattorganisation im späten Mittelalter (Berlin: Reimer, 2000), p. 27; Gertsman, Dance of Death, p. 105. The original verses were preserved before Wortmann updated them, see Susanne Warda, “Bernt Notke’s Dance of Death: Word and Image and Their Repercussions in Art and Literature,” in Art, Cult, and Patronage, ed. Albrecht and Mänd (Kiel: Ludwig, 2013), pp. 81–95, on verses between the Lübeck and Reval versions.

137 It is not the intention of this author to dispute Notke as the auteur of the Lübeck Dance of Death. See Martin Wangsgaard Jürgensen, “Do We Need Bernt Notke? Some Reflections on Workshops and Masters,” pp. 15-24.

138 The dating of Notke’s Dance of Death is still debated to the year 1463 or 1466; I use 1463/1466 because the dating is not central to my argument. See footnote below.
documents attesting to Notke’s workshop in Lübeck. Finally, no specific documents relate to the commission of this work, so the patronage of Notke’s work remains unconfirmed. Nonetheless, possible patrons of the painted panel have been suggested: the Vicarage (Vikarie) of St. Mary Church, Lübeck’s Circle Society (Zirkelgesellschaft), the Merchant Company (Kaufleute-Kompanie), or the city council. While no individual or group patron can be definitively assigned to the work, it seems relevant that the majority of proposed groups are mercantile or civic in nature as well as corporate rather than individual. These local urban corporate groups certainly were the intended viewing community for this work.

As architectural art historian Robert Bork has demonstrated, civic-sponsored cathedral projects of the fifteenth century are directly linked to civic patronage and identity. The city’s burghers often funded the late Gothic spires to cathedrals to symbolize the wealth and prosperity of their city. The added height of these churches alters the silhouette of the city, which is easily captured through the profile city view. While Lübeck did not have spires to compete with the largest spire projects of the day in

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139 Jakob Melle dated the work to 1463 based on a found inscription when copying in 1701: “Anno Domini MCCCCLXIII. in vigilia Assumptionis Marie” (am Vorabend vor Mariä Himmelfahrt, also am 14. August 1463). 1466 was suggested by Max Hasse, as it was the first date in which Notke and his workshop could have executed such a large commission. In Petermann, Bernt Notke, pp. 26-28. Harmut Freytag agrees with 1463 dating in his “Literatur- und Kulturhistorische Anmerkungen und Untersuchungen zum Lübecker und Revaler Totentanz” in Totentanz, pp. 16-17.

140 Peterman, Bernt Notke, pp. 29-30. Anu Mänd in also claims mercantile group patronage seems likely because of the merchant and burgher character types, Bernt Notke: Between Innovation and Tradition, p. 19. For further information on patterns of patronage from such urban groups in Lübeck, refer to Chapter Two.

141 Robert Bork, Great Spires: Skyscrapers of the New Jerusalem (Cologne: Kunsthistorisches Institut der Universität zu Köln, 2003).
Strasbourg, Chartres, Vienna, or Antwerp, the citizens of Lübeck had vested interest in seeing their city represented in a particular way—to experience the city from an ideal vantage point that accentuates their civic-supported buildings. For Lübeck then, the prestige of its monuments was associated with the power of the patrician and merchant class and its political autonomy.\footnote{Stabel, “Social Reality and Artistic Image: The Urban Experience in the Late Medieval Low Countries,” pp. 16-17.}

**LATE MEDIEVAL PAINTED CITY VIEWS**

Similar to Notke’s cityscape of Lübeck, Flemish and Netherlandish artists also painted pictorial urban representations in fifteenth-century commissions. To understand further the potential cultural meaning behind Notke’s work, let us turn to comparative pictorial cityscapes in the background of Flemish and Netherlandish paintings. These contemporaneous painted works demonstrate that Notke’s painted Lübeck was part of a wider fifteenth-century artistic trend that similarly used painted city views to assert social, civic, and individual identities.

The profile view was the most dominant form of representing pictorial urban images in fifteenth-century northern European paintings. A profile view depicts the city from a slightly elevated angle from a distance to picture the medieval city as a silhouette with the skyline that highlights the city’s most important monuments.\footnote{Edith Ennen, *The Medieval Town*, p. 1. Lucia Nuti, “The Perspective Plan in the Sixteenth Century: The Invention of a Representational Language” *The Art Bulletin* 76 (March 1994): pp. 105-28.} The profile view shows a city from a low exterior viewpoint—where the physical shape of the city, its
pinnacles, towers, and overall design are clearly articulated. This viewpoint enables the artist to render a city as a coherent civic body, distinct from the countryside by its conspicuous fortifications and built environment. For these reasons, fifteenth-century painters most frequently used the profile view over other representational viewpoints, such as the oblique or bird’s-eye views to depict urban territories.144

To be sure, painted city views in the profile mode were so widespread in the fifteenth century that historian Jelle de Rock has categorized such cityscapes in Flemish paintings as part of the *Image of the city* (FWO-Flanders) research project.145 His data draw on Flemish panel paintings from ca. 1420-1520 in KIK/IRPA archives in Brussels, and they reveal that an average of thirty-five percent of the 550 paintings examined contain a city view. Moreover, from 1450-1475, thirty-eight paintings used profile views—more than any other representational category during that time; and from 1475-1500, that number increased to 130. The profile view is the representational form of Flemish pictorial cityscapes in the fifteenth century.

Pictorial cityscapes can include real, identifiable civic spaces, such as Notke’s portrayal of Lübeck in his *Dance of Death*, or else a generic urban space like Jan van Eyck’s *Rolin Madonna* [Fig. 1.7; 1435, Louvre]. Flemish masters did not necessarily paint specific, identifiable cities in their fifteenth-century panel paintings. Dirk Bouts,

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145 Ibid., “The Image of the City Quantified.”
Hans Memling, and Gerard David, for example, often set a religious narrative against the backdrop of a cityscape. In such cases, this was meant to evoke Jerusalem, the historic city with the Temple, a round building, to bring the religious narrative home to fifteenth-century northern viewers—to offer a generic urban setting to liken the represented cityscape to Jerusalem.

Painting an imaginary cityscape appeared identifiable in part because of the convincing visual language of realism. Van Eyck’s Rolin Madonna is an excellent example of this—the background city has even been identified as Geneva, Lyons, Prague, Autun, Liège, Maastricht, Utrecht, or Stein am Rhein, all in an attempt to connect van Eyck and his patron Nicholas Rolin to a specific, recognizable location. Van Eyck, however, did not paint one particular urban center; rather, he carefully extracted from various cities, towns, and architectural and natural elements to construct an ideal type of a pictorial cityscape. Craig Harbison defines realism in cityscapes as an ideal expression of late Gothic architecture. That is to say, the represented urban space does not reference one specific place; rather, detailed and individualized elements make up an ideal

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146 The data from de Rock’s quantitative analysis also reveal that many represented cities were imaginary, in ibid. On Memling, see M. Kirkland-Ives, In the Footsteps of Christ: Hans Memling’s Passion Narratives and the Devotional Imagination in the Early Modern Netherlands (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013).
147 The background of cities in early Netherlandish painting is intertwined with methods based on connoisseurship to aid in attribution, biography, and patronage. In short, little attention has been paid to understand the potential meanings for representing a city in the background of a religious narrative in the foreground. Craig Harbison, “Fact, Symbol, Ideal: Roles for Realism in Early Netherlandish Painting,” in Petrus Christus in Renaissance Bruges: An Interdisciplinary Approach, ed. Maryan Wynn Ainsworth (Turnhout and New York: Brepols and Met Museum, 1995), p. 21.
148 Lotte Philips argues that this was to recall a heavenly Jerusalem. Quoted in Harbison, ibid., p. 33.
representation of a space.\textsuperscript{149} Simply put, the visual language of realism reinforces the notion that cities are identifiable. Such views challenge the visual rhetoric of cartographic representations as empirical, eyewitness, or accurate. With city views, we must question the motivations, alterations, and implications of a pictorially constructed city view.

**ASSOCIATIVE PRIDE IN CITY PORTRAITS**

The function of representing urban spaces during the fifteenth century varies widely. Whether a real or an imaginary urban space, the motivation and cultural meaning of picturing urban spaces in the background of paintings often depends on the support of the patron or intended viewing communities of the work. Alongside imaginary painted city views in the fifteenth century, contemporary views of European cities were frequently produced for the inhabitants of the represented city. De Rock has termed city views in early Netherlandish devotional images as “pictorial cityscapes,” arguing that profile views of particular cities were created for a “heterogeneous group of ducal officers, local, mercantile and clerical elites, who increasingly embraced an aristocratic visualization of the city.”\textsuperscript{150} In other words, religious paintings featuring ‘pictorial cityscapes’ of physical cities mediated between the holy imagery and the material desires of the elite patrons. At this time, the audience and patrons of paintings were a heterogeneous group of urban elites who sought to aggrandize their home city. As a

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., p. 23.
\textsuperscript{150} de Rock, “The Image of the City Quantified,” p. 75.
result, cityscapes are an image that the urban elite wanted to present to the outside world: they are a specific construction of the city—ducal, civic, or mercantile, among others.

While urban elites in the free imperial Hanse city of Lübeck were merchants and city councilmen—and thus, outside imperial or royal milieux—an early form of documented pride remains at the French and Flemish courts. In French illuminated manuscripts, miniature French urban and pastoral landscape symbolized a crafted patriotic identity. For instance, Erik Inglis interprets the inclusion of cityscapes and architectural portraits in the Limbourg Brothers’ *Très Riches Heures* and Jean Fouquet’s *Les Grandes Chroniques du France* to a larger pre-modern nationalistic project.¹⁵¹ In the *Très Riches Heures*, produced for Duc Jean de Berry (1340-1416), the Limbourg Brothers prominently feature the patron’s castle, the château of Lusignan [Fig. 1.8; fol. 3v March]. De Berry’s fortified residence dominates the agricultural scene. On the one hand, the castle signifies that the Duc de Berry oversees his land and the peasants working on his land. On the other hand, the castle also points to a wider interest of patrons wanting to see a portrait of their home in true likeness in painted form. There are other identifiable monuments and locations included in the background of the *Très Riches Heures* as well, such as June [Fig. 1.8, fol. 6v], which features Jean de Berry’s residence in Paris. The viewpoint for this illuminated manuscript gives the viewer a glimpse of Paris along the Seine; the King’s Garden in the Palais de la Cité is located on the left side.

behind the crenellated walls. Most importantly, the King’s chapel, Sainte Chapelle, rises high above the urban view.¹⁵²

Such architectural portraits focus on monuments closely tied to French royal identity at the time—which assert patriotism, stability, and power in service of the court. Similarly, in Jean Fouquet’s *Grandes Chroniques*, ten of the fifty-one miniatures feature identifiable representations of French architectural monuments in Paris. Fouquet, who served the French kings between 1440-1480, was motivated to oblige his royal patrons to promote the capital after the tumultuous territorial conflict, the Hundred Years War.¹⁵³ The French court artist also produced convincing views of other French towns, such as Clichy, Montpensier, Rheims, and Tours as a way to foster French power and authority during such unstable years.¹⁵⁴

The cityscape in the background of Rogier’s *Bladelin Triptych* [Fig. 1.9; c. 1456-61, Gemäldegalerie Berlin] has been investigated as a construction of an elite identity—a mode of self-representation for newly appointed government officials to craft nobility through a painted commission.¹⁵⁵ In the triptych, the donor portrait of Peter Bladelin is located in the center composition featuring the Nativity, and a pictorial cityscape of a town is directly behind the donor figure. Bladelin (c. 1410-1472), a self-made man who

¹⁵⁴ Buisseret, *Mapmakers Quest*, p. 35
served in the court of the Valois Dukes of Burgundy, helped to build the town pictured in the triptych, Middleburg in East Flanders, near Bruges. In particular, Bladelin patronized churches, expanded the castle and urban residences, and initiated other programs that elevated his status to noble rank. Thus, the cityscape of Middleburg signifies Bladelin’s constructed city as his passage to elite status.156

The pride that the French court carried in their nationalistic monuments is analogous to the pride of merchants and burghers in their civic-founded architecture. For trade cities, such as Bruges or Lübeck, the town should be shown prosperous and stable, and should communicate this condition to the public, especially the merchants, on whom commercial stability depended. Erwin Panofsky in his monumental Early Netherlandish Painting stated that city views in Flemish works “flattered the civic pride of their clients, and showed off their own dexterity, by rendering the local landmarks in a manner that would do honor to graduate students in architecture.”157 Such civic-oriented city views placed great emphasis on the depiction of each major architectural monument that comprised the city view.

The representation of specific civic landmarks is particularly true of the urban image of Bruges. Like Lübeck, the artistic image of Bruges in the late fifteenth century is closely connected to its civic pride and urban identity. De Rock identified twenty-eight

\[156\] Ann Markham Schulz has challenged the identification of the town by pointing out that the earliest images with that label derive from Rogier, though it is probably a confirmation of the name of the castle site. In Dirk de Vos, Rogier van der Weyden: The Complete Works (New York: Harry Abrams, 1999), pp. 244-248, see esp. fn 15.

Bruges cityscapes painted between the years 1480 and 1520 by two anonymous artists, the Master of the Legend of St. Lucy (c. 1470-1500) and the Master of St. Ursula (c. 1436-1505), both active in Bruges.¹⁵⁸ Identifiable monuments, specifically the towers of Our Lady's Church, the Belfry, the Burgher’s Lodge (Poortersloge), and the Hanse trading house (Oosterlingenhuis) were given prominence in their depictions of Bruges.

The Bruges-based painter Master of the Legend of St. Lucy prolifically painted identifiable views of Bruges in fifteenth-century Flemish paintings. Max J. Friedländer attributed a handful of painted works to this unnamed Master in 1903, hastily naming ‘The Master of the Legend of St. Lucy’ after a single painting, *The Legend of St. Lucy* [Fig. 1.10; Bruges, Sint-Jacobskerk], and eventually he identified twenty-five paintings by the artist in his *Altniederländische Malerei*.¹⁵⁹ While the identity and biography of the Master of the Legend of St. Lucy remain hotly contested, the representation of a Bruges cityscape in the background of his works has served as a sign of authorship.¹⁶⁰ Based on

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¹⁵⁸ De Rock, “Image of the City Quantified,” p. 76. In particular, Master of the Legend of St. Lucy painted eighteen, and Master of St. Ursula painted eight.
¹⁶⁰ Friedländer called views of Bruges a ‘signature’ of the Lucy Legend Master, quoted in Roberts “The Master of the Legend of Saint Lucy,” p. 19. Roberts identifies the anonymous Lucy Legend Master as Jan de Hervy, which she recants in a later publication in “The City and the Convent: ‘The Virgin of the Rose Garden’ by the Master of the Legend of St. Lucy,” *Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts* 72 no. 1/2 (1998): pp. 56-65. Nonetheless, there remains great debate over his identity, and in particular, the time he spent in Bruges and in his formal training. See also Chapter Three for the Master of the Legend of St. Lucy.
the artist’s repeated motif of detailed Bruges cityscapes, it is generally accepted that the artist was active in Bruges—and his works have also been dated based on the changing skyline of Bruges corresponding to the stages of construction of the Belfry between 1480-90.\textsuperscript{161}

For example, in the carefully rendered walls and towers of Bruges in \textit{The Virgin Among the Rose Garden} [Fig. 1.11; 1475-1480, Detroit Museum of Art], the artist shows the Belfry without the lantern, which was completed in 1487. The painting also includes other identifiable towers, the towers of the \textit{Poortersloge} [1], Our Lady [2], Palace of Louis Gruuthuse [3], the Convent of Saint Catherine, the Belfry [5], and the Saint Catherine Gate [6] [Fig. 1.12].\textsuperscript{162} Art historian Ann Roberts argues that the prominence of the tower and gate of St. Catherine’s Convent in this work, which is uncommon in the artist’s other paintings that feature the cityscape of Bruges, refers to the commissioning party of this work.\textsuperscript{163} Thus, this topographic precision may have catered to a specific interpretive viewing community—the Convent of St. Catherine—so that the community could make an easy association between their religious devotion and their own city, Bruges.

The prominence of the Bruges belfry and identifiable towers in Master of the Legend of St. Lucy paintings served in part to aggrandize the city. Roberts interprets the changing view of the Belfry as a way for the artist to show his local currency with

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., “The City and the Convent,” p. 57.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., pp. 62-63.
Bruges’s civic growth. In other words, the detailed rendering of specific monuments was drawn from close observation of the city to attest to the artist’s intimate knowledge of the city’s architecture. In other paintings by the Master of the Legend of St. Lucy shows a different Bruges in terms of the city setting. For instance, the cityscape of *The Lamentation* [Fig. 1.13, 1493-1501, Minneapolis Institute of Arts] is set against an entirely different landscape of water and not mountains. *The Lamentation* also includes the trading house of the Hanseatic League (*Oosterlingenhus*) in addition to the standard towers and monuments of the city. Thus, the Master of the Legend of St. Lucy also omitted specific monuments in such works.

To return to Notke’s maritime profile view of Lübeck, the artist placed emphasis on specific civic and patrician monuments, notably St. Mary Church. By doing so, Notke’s urban image catered to the wider patrician interests of the city and demonstrated his intimate knowledge of the city’s built environment. Most importantly, the view of Lübeck in the Dance of Death served as the image source for subsequent pictorial representations of Lübeck well into the sixteenth century. In short, Notke’s urban image of Lübeck would come to stand for a coherent civic ideal as the Head of the Hanse: a free imperial, patrician-run, well-ordered trade city.

**LÜBECK OUTSIDE LÜBECK IN STRALSUND AND REVAL**

A second *Dance of Death* painting arrived in Reval (Tallinn) sometime at the end of the fifteenth century. The work is attributed to the Lübeck painter and sculptor Bernt

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Notke and was likely installed in the St. Matthew’s Chapel in the Church of St. Nicholas [Figs. 1.14-1.16]. The Church of St. Nicholas, consecrated to the patron saint of merchants and seafarers, served as one of the two parish churches in medieval Reval. St. Matthew’s Chapel was enlarged and rebuilt from 1486 to 1493, so Notke’s work was likely ordered after the expansion. Made of canvas for easy transportation, Notke’s Reval *Dance of Death* painting features select Lübeck landmarks to stand in as a generic Hanseatic citiescape: the specific Lübeck monuments of Mill Gate, Imperial Gate, and St. Mary are shown behind the medieval morality play in the foreground. This work of art by an Lübeck artist in Reval points to wider network of cultural transfer across Hanse trade routes.

A Hanse city in Livonia, Reval functioned as an important Hanse trade partner in the late-medieval period, providing raw materials such as honey, fur, and amber to the north European markets of Lübeck and Bruges. In other words, Reval merchants conducted business regularly with Lübeck traders, where works of art also flowed alongside the exchange of raw materials. Reval’s most prominent merchant urban groups, the Brotherhood of the Black Heads and the Great Guild, co-sponsored Lübeck artist

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165 St. Matthew’s chapel later renamed St. Anthony’s in the Church of St. Nicholas. The Church is now the Niguliste Museum, housing the medieval ecclesiastic collection of the Art Museum of Estonia.


167 The *Dance of Death* in Reval was first mentioned in a 1603 account book of the warden of St. Nicholas Church.

168 On the status of Reval trade and brotherhood retables in Reval, see Chapter Three.
Hermen Rode for the high altar of the Church of St. Nicholas—the same church as *Dance of Death* [Figs. 3.28-3.33, *The Sts. Nicholas and Viktor Altarpiece*, 1478-1481]. The Great Guild went on to commission Notke directly for their group altar, the *High Altarpiece of the Church of the Holy Spirit* [Figs. 3.39-3.41, 1483].¹⁶⁹ The arrival of Notke’s *Dance of Death* in Reval likely stemmed from these direct connections between Reval merchants and Lübeck, further demonstrating the shared artistic and cultural connections throughout the Hanse region as facilitated by Lübeck merchants.

Like many works from the Baltic region, Notke’s Reval panel suffered significant damage during the Second World War, so only a fragment remains today.¹⁷⁰ Equally challenging to present art historians, the lack of documentation makes it difficult to date the work, but it is generally assumed that the work was produced after Notke’s Lübeck panel, 1463/66. Except for the background, the *Dance of Death* is nearly identical to Notke’s Lübeck version: the same societal types are included as well as the shared language, Middle Low German.¹⁷¹ Thirteen figures are preserved on the fragment, including the character types of the Pope, Emperor, Empress, Cardinal, and King.

¹⁶⁹ Notke’s commission for the *Great Guild Altarpiece* is dated to 1483 based on a letter requesting payment. Notke’s name is also found in documentation for is *Århus Altarpiece* (1479). Notke’s name, however, was not connected through archival sources to his *Triumphal Cross* in the Lübeck Cathedral until the 1970s. These three works make up the firmly attributed Notke corpus.

¹⁷⁰ The Church of St. Nicholas was bombed during an air raid on 9 March 1944. The fragment measures seven and a half meters, yet it is estimated that the original might have reached thirty. In Merike Kurisoo, *Niguliste Museum* (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstimuuseum, 2011), p. 21.

¹⁷¹ Some of the verses have been altered. See Warda “Bernt Notke’s *Dance of Death*: Word and Image and Their Repercussions in Art and Literature,” pp. 81-95.
Lübeck-based art historian Carl Georg Heise proposed that the Reval panel was cut from the Lübeck original before the new Wortmann copy in 1701 was completed. According to this logic, the Reval Dance of Death was not mentioned in documentation until 1603 simply because it was not yet in Reval. However, given the similarities between the Reval Dance of Death and Bernt Notke’s surviving panels of God the Father for the Schonenfahrer Altarpiece in Lübeck [Fig. 2.41; c. 1475], it seems Notke and his workshop likely executed the Reval Dance of Death after the Lübeck original.

Elina Gertsman argues that the absence of a completed cityscape in the Reval Dance of Death likely indicates that Notke never traveled to its city of destination. Notke’s painting features fortified towers and a double spire church in brick—in other words, ubiquitous elements of Hanseatic built environments in towns stretching between Lübeck to Reval. It seems likely, therefore, that merchants in Reval made multivalent


associations between their merchant-founded St. Nicholas and the St. Mary Church in Lübeck. Alternatively, it was also possible that Hanse merchants in Reval, many of whom stemmed from Lübeck or traveled to Lübeck regularly on business, wanted a replica, copy, or similar version of Lübeck’s *Dance of Death* in their own mercantile patrician church.

In the same mercantile church in Reval as Notke’s *Dance of Death*, Hermen Rode’s *St. Nicolas and Viktor Altarpiece* was installed at the high altar in 1481 [Fig. 1.19]. Located on the bottom register of the second opening, the painted view of Lübeck appears prominently in the background of the final scene of St. Viktor’s *vita*. Viktor’s decapitated corpse is thrown into the Wakenitz River by his persecutors; on the opposite riverbank, angels retrieve the martyr’s body. The inscription on the bottom of the painted panel, excerpted from the *Legends of St. Victor* (Story 8), reads: “Here they cast his body into the sea and the angels bring him to the land and he is honorably buried.”

The view of Lübeck in this scene likens the Wakenitz to purifying holy water, miraculously transforming the body of St. Nicholas.

The Great Guild and the Brotherhood of the Black Heads co-sponsored this retable to adorn the high altar of the Church of St. Nicholas. Like Notke, Rode was a

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175 “Hir werpen se synen lycha in dat mer und de engele brochten en to lande und wart erliken begraven.”
176 This work today is one of the best-preserved late-medieval high altarpieces. The Estonian national project, titled “Rode in Close-Up,” has examined Rode’s altarpiece now in the Niguliste Museum in Tallinn. The results are presented in an interactive format online: “Rode in Close-Up” [http://www.rodeniguliste.ee/static/rode/index-eng.html](http://www.rodeniguliste.ee/static/rode/index-eng.html).
177 The circumstances and documentation around the sponsorship of this retable are addressed in Chapter Three.
Lübeck-based artist; he was commissioned in 1478 to paint the life and deeds of St. Nicholas. Representing Lübeck from the northeast, Rode shows Lübeck’s skyline of holy and civic pinnacles rising above the medieval fortified walls. Rode ordered the monuments in the same composition as Notke, which emphasizes the centrality of St. Mary Church. The church spires include: (left to right): Mill Gate (1), the Cathedral (2), St. Giles (3), St. John Cloister (4), St. Peter (5), Town Hall (6), St. Mary (7), St. Catherine (8), Castle Friary (9), St. Jacob (10), and Holy Ghost Hospital (12) [Fig. 1.20]. Furthermore, Rode took the same artistic liberties to ensure a pictorial view of the city; his painting used the profile view to elevate the city’s most important monuments to visual prominence. In other words, Rode condensed the physical space between the city’s monuments to represent Lübeck; the space between the city’s southern monuments—the Cathedral and St. Giles Church—and the center—St. Mary and the Town Hall—is compressed to fit the martyrdom scene and to provide a compact overall view.

Rode and Notke, both artists who maintained a workshop in Lübeck, offered an alleged ‘authentic’ view of the city. Yet, these artists did not paint Lübeck in absolute likeness. Rather, we must question the motivation for having a view of another city installed in a distant mercantile church. In the case of Rode in Reval, an altarpiece produced in Lübeck by a prominent local artist was destined for another city. Perhaps it provided a trademark of good quality, signifying the Lübeck artist’s authorship, authority, and authenticity.178 After all, Lübeck was the leading trade city and producer of carved

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wooden images in the Baltic region at this time, and the presence of a large-scale, Lübeck-made altarpiece in Reval would have been both a prestigious commission and acquisition. Here, too, perhaps we can think about the Lübeck profile views in Reval as a reminder of Reval’s own participation in the Hanse—a sign of strong relationships between the two cities. Artistic production—in this specific case, city views—was one of many ways that participating Hanse cities could align themselves with Lübeck.

In Stralsund, a northern coastal Wendish Hanse town about 210 kilometers northeast of Lübeck, a painted view of Lübeck appears in the background of a Crucifixion scene in the *Altarpiece of the Schneider*, located at the High Altar of St. Nicholas [Figs. 1.17-1.18, 1470-90]. Indeed, St. Nicholas was a pervasive patron saint for parish churches serving mercantile communities in the Middle Ages. Made in the Lübeck standard, this altarpiece is comprised of painted and carved scenes with double wings. Located at the bottom register of the first opening, the view of Lübeck is divided by the body of Crucified Christ. With Lübeck in the background of a Christian martyrdom scene, its inclusion symbolically likens Lübeck to Jerusalem.¹⁷⁹ The four church towers emerge behind the foreground Crucifixion narrative. Unlike Notke’s painted view of the Lübeck in his *Dance of Death* in St. Mary Church, the view of Lübeck in Stralsund is difficult to identify precisely as Lübeck: the Stralsund version is much less topographically specific, so it functions more as a generalized type of early city views. The double and single towers cannot be identified as a particular monument of the city.

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The Altarpiece of the Schneider was commissioned by one of the many mercantile confraternities in Stralsund for that city’s main patrician church, St. Nicholas. A representation of the city of Lübeck, even this rudimentary one, calls for a clear comparison between Stralsund and Lübeck. Moreover, St. Nicholas in Stralsund was modeled after St. Mary Church in Lübeck—the church that housed Notke’s Dance of Death and that was so prominently featured in subsequent painted and printed city views. St. Nicholas in Stralsund and St. Mary Church in Lübeck shared mercantile spaces and Hanseatic geographies; both are main patrician churches, communal spaces for the same Hanse merchants and seaman, who would be undoubtedly be familiar with the Lübeck landscape.

Lübeck, the all-important geographical port for east-west trade along the North and Baltic Seas, determined that virtually all raw materials and goods from the east, that is from cities like Stralsund and Reval, came through Lübeck before being distributed to inland or western sea trade routes. To be sure, Lübeck’s skyline would have been a familiar sight to every merchant and seaman in the Hanse region. Undoubtedly, the viewing communities in both Reval and Stralsund would have been able to identify the painted panorama as Lübeck. The painted views of Lübeck in both Stralsund and Reval—connected across Hanse trade routes—points to the shared cultural connections between distant cities. Lübeck’s city views recreate the littoral or mercantile experience of entering and exiting the city—a view fit for the viewing communities who depend on seafaring trade as livelihood. The presence of such city views outside Lübeck extend the represented space of Lübeck to other places, so that distant towns also shared Lübeck’s
geography. Therefore, the existence of views outside of Lübeck clearly had larger implications for the importance of the city as the so-called leader of the Hanse trade network: they reinforce the strongly connected mercantile communities and nodal cities of the Hanse network. In other words, Notke’s *Dance of Death* in Reval, Rode’s view of Lübeck at the high altar, and the view of Lübeck in Stralsund further suggest that Hanse mercantile groups and participating towns looked toward Lübeck, demonstrating the complexities of spatial and identity relationships that occurred through trade exchanges.

**PRINTED LÜBECK**

Like countless other cities in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the image of Lübeck was printed and circulated. This section looks at the printed images of Lübeck throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and in particular, at how printed views of Lübeck drew upon earlier painted representations of cities in profile form. Similar to Notke’s painted view of Lübeck, the profile view becomes the pictorial composition of printed city views of Lübeck: it spatially manipulates important monuments and places emphasis on the Hanse trade activity of the city.

The first woodcut featuring Lübeck’s monuments was published in a book, titled *Rudimentum novitiorum* (*Elementary Book of Beginners*) [Fig. 1.21]. Printed by Lucas Brandis in Lübeck in August 1475, the small woodcut *Lubec construit primo* depicts the medieval construction of the city.¹⁸⁰ This woodblock print defines the city through the

common late Gothic urban features, such as towers, spires, and pinnacles. *Lubec construit primo* metonymically represents Lübeck under construction; the city portrait is reduced to the skyline to signify the city as a whole. As a result, this urban image looks generic or nonspecific. As Jürgen Schulz has argued, medieval maps are “emblems,” because they fail to convey topographical information or resemble a portrait likeness.\(^{181}\) While Brandis’s woodcut is a view and not a map, it fails to communicate geographic information the way future views of Lübeck do. Yet, locals surely would have been able to identify the double spires of the Cathedral and St. Mary Church, the pinnacles of the Town Hall, as well as the single tower of St. Peter Church in the print.\(^{182}\) In the foreground, workers labor to build the brick Gothic structures that make up the city. In this early moment in woodblock printmaking, brick material and church spires signify the built environment of Lübeck. These landmarks, moreover, are painted red in the hand-colored edition to illustrate the red Gothic brick architecture that helps characterize the city as Lübeck.

The *Rudimentum Novitorum* was a Latin historical encyclopedia with two maps, a T-O *mappa mundi* and a map of the Holy Land. Both maps are visually rooted in the...
medieval tradition—to map geography and sacred history together. Thus, a generic view of Lübeck is situated alongside the geographic conception of the world. Based on the contents of the book, which include two maps and geographic descriptions, Wesley Brown suggests that the author of *Rudimentum Novitiorum* was likely a learned man with access to early cartographic sources, possibly a Franciscan or member of the minorite monastery, based on the theological leanings of the maps. As a result, Brandis encourages comparison between Lübeck’s known places and the known representational system of the *mappa mundi* and Holy Land.

Geography as a subject was particularly suited to the explosive growth of printmaking in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. It is estimated that there were thirty city views with identifiable cities before 1490, and a century later in 1590, there were too many city views to count. Thus, after the last quarter of the fifteenth century to the end of the sixteenth century, printed maps, city views, chronicles, and geography books clearly proliferated. Moreover, during this period in German-speaking lands, geography, chorography, topography, and cartography were being appropriated to define

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nascent ideas of a ‘German’ national identity.\textsuperscript{186} Alongside this new interest in printed profile city views was the publishing of Ptolemy’s second-century treatise, \textit{Geography}, which was translated into Latin by Jacobus Angelues and produced in Florence between 1469-1472.\textsuperscript{187} Ptolemy distinguished between two different systems of representing geography: geography and chorography. The Roman author likened geography to the face, and chorography to a particular facial feature, like an ear or a nose [Fig. 1.22].\textsuperscript{188} Chorography then depends on specific description, not generalization, in order to depict a city’s plan and overall design.

To be sure, prints completely changed how fifteenth-century viewing interpretive communities interacted with city views: the painted views that were once only available to church-going publics were now circulating, meaning one could now possess a view of another town without traveling. One could now travel without physically doing so—becoming a traveler by proxy through printed views. Bronwen Wilson points out that printed city views at this time also encouraged easy comparison of cities in terms of their size, topographical organization, and overall appearance.\textsuperscript{189} Prints are “exactly

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\item \textsuperscript{188} Woodward, "Cartography and the Renaissance: Continuity and Change," p. 8.
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reproducible images,” in the words of William Ivins in his foundational study on prints, allowing the general public to view identical images of specific geographical places. In this way, printed city views are fundamentally different from the painted cityscapes previously examined in this chapter: they are reproducible, identical images that enable the public to travel by proxy. As a result, the subject matter of city views tended to focus on the city itself, not as a background to a religious narrative in the foreground like in painted views. Accordingly, there was a marked change in both function and audience since the advent of printed city views.

**LÜBECK IN FIFTEENTH- AND SIXTEENTH-CENTURY PRINTED BOOKS**

Period interest in city views—more specifically in views of Lübeck—is traceable from printed books in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For example, Lübeck was included in Hartmann Schedel’s *Nuremberg Chronicle* (1493) and Sebastian Münster’s *Cosmographia* (1544). While views of Lübeck in printed geography books could not compete with other historical and biblical cities like Jerusalem and Rome, these images of Lübeck nonetheless circulated alongside such known and revered places. Most importantly, the image sources for views of Lübeck in printed books derived locally from Lübeck.

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Artist Erhard Reuwich designed some of the first printed views of contemporary cities in Bernard von Breydenbach’s *Peregrinatio in terram sanctam* (Journey to the Holy Lands) in 1486. This printed book with its unprecedented printed views of cities along a holy pilgrimage served as inspirational source material for Schedel’s *Chronicle* and Münster’s *Cosmographia*, in part because of Reuwich’s pictorial use of the profile view. The *View of Jerusalem* [Fig. 1.23], for instance, is the second largest city view in the book—the largest is the city of the pilgrims’ departure and return, Venice. The view is roughly four feet by eleven inches, printed from three woodblock prints. The city of Jerusalem is represented in the center, surrounded by other holy sites of the Levant that the pilgrims visited, including Damascus, Jaffa, Bethlehem, Mt. Sion, & Egypt. Reuwich combines two views, a map of the Holy Land and a profile view of Jerusalem, into one composition. The Lübeck artist Elias Diebel in his massive oversize woodcut of Lübeck later employs this visual manipulation technique of composite views in 1552 [Fig. 1.32].

Schedel’s *Chronicle of the World* (*Liber chronicarum, Book of Chronicles*) from 1493 was the first major compilation of city views from around the known world. While Reuwich’s views reproduce the holy scenes along a pilgrimage journey, the *Chronicle* presents a universal history of the world in chronological order from the beginning of the world to the present, providing an historical account of city origins and several city views. Printed in either Latin or vernacular German, the book is also known as the

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192 Ibid., pp. 101-139.
Nuremberg Chronicle, named after its place of production. The Chronicle includes 1804 woodcuts printed in 600 pages, including 652 distinct illustrations, and 116 city views, including biblical and historical scenes, as well as imaginary city views.\textsuperscript{193}

The View of Lübeck in Schedel’s Nuremberg Chronicle was one of thirty ‘authentic’ views of cities printed in this popular late fifteenth-century world history book.\textsuperscript{194} The View of Lübeck [Figs. 1.24-1.25] was the first printed city view of the city; unlike Lübeck in Brandis’s Rudimentum, Lübeck in Schedel’s Chronicle represents the city as a unit with recognizable monuments that further authenticate the view. Lübeck is also identifiable by the name “Lubeca” in the upper right quadrant of the printed view.

The image is structured like many others in the Chronicle: the silhouette of the city rises above schematically represented fortified walls. However, Lübeck in the Chronicle also features specific monuments in the city, such as the Mill Gate (1) on the left, the Castle Gate (15, 16) on the right, as well as the city’s churches that were also previously rendered by Notke: the Castle Friary (13), Holy Ghost Hospital (12), St. Jacob (11), St. Catharine (10), St. Peter (7), St. John’s Convent (6), St. Giles (5), the Cathedral (3), and the Imperial Gate (2) [Fig. 1.26]. Moreover, St. Mary Church (9) and her twin spires stand in the center of the view and tower over the other monuments. Most significant, the view of Lübeck is taken from the northeast along the banks of the

\textsuperscript{193} It is estimated that thirty-two city views are authentic panoramas; twenty-one are imaginary cities. The only double city view spread is Nuremberg. See Adrian Wilson, The Making of the Nuremberg Chronicle, ed. Peter Zahn, Joyce Lancaster Wilson, and Edith Goodkind Rosenwald (Amsterdam: Nico Israel, 1977), p. 125.

\textsuperscript{194} Friedrich Bruns and Hugo Rahtgens, Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler der Freien und Hansestadt Lübeck, Bd. 1 T.1, pp. 20-21.
Wakenitz Canal on the Falken peninsula—the same vantage point as Bernt Notke’s painted view of Lübeck in the *Dance of Death*.

Notke’s work likely served as image source material to record the ‘authentic’ view of Lübeck in the *Chronicle*. Art historian Jasper van Putten has demonstrated that the contracts for compiling the accurate designs for city views in the *Cosmographia* were extensive and often followed personal and trade networks.\(^{195}\) Elisabeth Rücker and Anja Rasche claim that Schedel’s workshop must have sent reports from Hanse travelers and drawings of Lübeck from local artists to aid in the accurate view of Lübeck for the *Nuremberg Chronicle*.\(^{196}\) The manuscript of the *Chronicle* was finished in 1491 and printed in 1493; thus, it seems plausible that Notke and Hermen Rode’s views of Lübeck served as prior inspiration to represent Lübeck in print.\(^{197}\)

Alongside the printed image of Lübeck, first-hand knowledge of the city is further evident from the textual praise of the clean streets and the brick infrastructures.\(^{198}\) Schedel also identifies the current Bishop of Lübeck as “Herr Dietrich von Hamburg.”\(^{199}\) The *Chronicle* also relates the printed city view to the economic significance of Lübeck, stating that merchants from the “upper and lower German lands and the lake of Norway,

\(^{197}\) Wilson, *Making of the Nuremberg Chronicle*, pp. 50-52.  
Sweden, Livonia, Russia, Lithuania, Prussia, Poland, Pomerania, Mecklenburg, 
Denmark, England, Flanders, Scotland, and France” visited Lübeck. The text further 
identifies Lübeck as a free-imperial city, but the Hanse consortium goes unnamed. 
Nonetheless, Lübeck’s status as a trade city is visually reinforced by the city’s placement 
on the water: a man commands a small flat-bottomed boat in the foreground, and the sails 
of ships are visible, as the Wakenitz connects to the Baltic Sea—an intersection that is 
geographically impossible. These modifications visually reinforce Lübeck’s position as a trade town without illustrating the bustling mercantile life on the River Trave, which connected the island of Lübeck directly to the Baltic Sea.

The second large-scale printed book to feature an ‘authentic’ view of Lübeck is 
Sebastian Münster’s Cosmographia, first published in Basel in 1544. Like its 
predent, the Nuremberg Chronicle, the Cosmographia was not a city views book or an 
atlas, but rather a printed project to represent the world in a specific Germano-Christian 
world order. In particular, Münster (1488-1552) used city views in his book to define and glorify Germania: the thirty-eight city views in the Cosmographia chronicle the history of Germany as well express local pride and national identity through geography.

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201 By 1550, Münster printed its fifth edition, printed in both Latin and German. Lübeck had title page in Latin version not German. See van Putten, The Networked Nation, p. 39.
Münster’s project resembles the Nuremberg-based humanist tradition that viewed itself temporally as a Golden Age at the turn of the sixteenth century.203 Such Southern German humanists marshaled German topography to demonstrate the links between land and identity. For example, in Conrad Celtis’s *Quatuor libri amorum*, the protagonist of the story travels to the capitals of the four border regions of the empire, Lübeck, Cracow, Regensburg, and Mainz, as a way to experience Germany.204 The frontispiece to the work [Fig. 1.27] identifies Lübeck as the capital of the most northern border of Germany. Jörg Robert argues that the “Amores” project links experience to travel during this period of national identity resurgence, as Celtis encourages readers to travel across Germany, not Europe, to gain experience:

> There are plenty of people who pride themselves in having travelled to Gaul, Spain, Poland and Hungary, even the countries overseas. I, however, deem just as praiseworthy a German philosopher who has personally observed and seen for himself the borders of his linguistic area, the various customs, laws, languages, regions, and finally the looks, the affects and the various physical properties [of the residents].”

Celtis also humorously recounts a visit to an underground tavern in Lübeck, where he indulged in sausage and beer.206 While Celtis mentions Lübeck by verbal descriptions only—and does not include a pictorial printed image of the city like Schedel and Münster—the humanist nonetheless defines northern Germany through its capital,

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Lübeck. Therefore, by the first decade of the sixteenth century, Lübeck was clearly considered the most important city in the North German region, a bridge to the Baltic.

The image of Lübeck in Münster’s *Cosmographia* [Figs. 1.28-1.30] stresses Lübeck’s status as a trade city. According to van Putten, the views in the *Cosmographia* can be categorized based on the function that the view relays, such as economic, territorial, or genealogical. Lübeck in the *Cosmographia* is categorized as an ‘economic city view’: the economic importance of Lübeck determined the perspective, layout, and structure of the view. The patrons of the printed book were the same class who prospered from trade, so they had motivation to accentuate the economic role of the city. For example, the low vantage point of the profile view of Lübeck elongates the city horizontally to place emphasis on easy access to the sea. Lübeck’s major monuments are labeled to aid identification: the Town Hall, the Cathedral, the Holy Ghost Hospital, and the city’s seven churches, St. Giles, St. John, St. Peter, St. Mary, St. Catherine, St. Jacob, and the Dominican Castle Friary [Fig. 1.30]. Several ships in the foreground and billowing plumes of smoke punctuate the skyline to emphasize the local trade economy and industry. Above the city view is the inscription: Die Statt Lübeck/eine auß den fûrnemsten stetten so am moere gelegen/ab contrafehet (“The city Lübeck/one of the most noble places located on the sea/is depicted here”) [Fig. 1.27, German edition] and Lubecum, una ex praeclerioribus maritimus ciuitatibus, ad uium hic depicta (“Lübeck, one of the famous distinguished cities of the sea, is depicted here according to life”) [Fig. 1.28, Latin edition].

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207 van Putten, *The Networked Nation*, p. 35.
Münster’s project required a massive system of organization from patronage to production in order to print the large book. This endeavor was highly collaborative, in that the artists, patrons, middlemen, draftsmen, woodcutters, and printers all worked together to determine the final form and content of the city views of the *Cosmographia*. Van Putten’s study of the patronage network to acquire accurate designs for city views in the *Cosmographia* reveals that the commission of the view of Lübeck was connected to her sister Hanse city, Lüneburg. In particular, Joseph Münster, Sebastian Münster’s nephew, served as a middleman to procure local sources for city views of Lübeck and Lüneburg. The success of city views in printed books, such as Breydenbach’s, Schedel’s and Münster’s, depended on the accurate, eyewitness authority of the artist or woodblock designer. Indeed, the term *vedute*, translated as ‘views’, also means ‘things that have been viewed’; *vedute* indicates things viewed or experienced in the past. That is, the guarantee of the printed image depends on its being a truthful portrayal of the represented city. In the specific designs for Lübeck in the *Cosmographia*, for example, Joseph Münster was an attorney and a member of the city council in Lüneburg. He would have certainly been familiar with Lübeck and likely maintained close contacts with other patricians and merchants between the two cities. The status of Joseph Münster can be further related to Notke and Rode as local artists, in which painting a familiar place reinforces the authority of the urban images as authentic. In other words, Joseph Münster

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209 Ibid.; and Friedrich Bruns and Hugo Rahtgens note David Kandel as the designer and Christoph Stimmer as the woodcutter, *Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler der Freien und Hansestadt Lübeck*, Bd. 1 T.1, p. 21.
acted as an intermediary in the production of the view of Lübeck, akin to how local Lübeck merchants during this time also facilitated the mobility of altarpieces across the Baltic to Scandinavia and Livonia.

The stylistic similarities of the views of Lübeck and Lüneburg in the Cosmographia both represent Hanse cities from a low profile viewpoint, painted red to signify the Backsteingotik, with textual identification to point out the cities’ economic functions. To be sure, the image of Lübeck in the Cosmographia stresses the city’s trade access to the sea, and more specifically, Lübeck’s access to salt via Lüneburg. In the printed book, Lübeck is linked visually and textually to its salt sister Hanse city, Lüneburg. The View of Lüneburg [Fig. 1.31] highlights the city’s salt mine production over other religious monuments: the sites of salt production, die Sultz and Kalckberg, are enlarged and are labeled by name. Lüneburg’s main commodity was salt—a crucial natural resource to sustain Hanse trade in the Baltic. Salt, transported to Lübeck, was then used to preserve herring, cod, and other Baltic fish to be traded inland. Joseph Münster describes salt in Cosmographia as “the predominant source of food, productivity, and trade for the citizens and inhabitants.”

Thus, Lübeck was connected to Lüneburg’s trade; moreover, Lübeck’s position in the Hanse ensured the livelihood for local merchants as well as Lüneburg traders. In short, salt was a vital commodity to the Hanse trade network. The views of Lüneburg and Lübeck, according to van Putten, were commodities themselves, “bought, purchased, and transported across German lands

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211 Quoted in van Putten, Networked Nation, p. 137.
before they ended up in the *Cosmographia.*”\(^2\) That is, the views of Lübeck and Lüneburg functioned like a mercantile good that sustained the local economy and the wider Hanse trade network. In addition, Lübeck did not manufacture materials or cultivate natural resources, but rather specialized in the transfer of raw materials. As a result, the views of Lübeck, including the *Cosmographia* version, stress the city’s trade connections and ability for the city to acquire such raw materials easily. Unlike other ‘economic’ views in the *Cosmographia*, the view of Lübeck accentuates the easy accessibility to materials rather than the fertility of its land.

The emphasis on Lübeck’s trade is a recurring theme in all of its printed city views: a city grown by trade, made rich by trade, and sustained by trade. The views of Lübeck in printed books framed the city’s trade as its source of pride and livelihood by emphasizing the role of Lübeck in the Hanse and its geographic position near the sea. From the production of city views in the *Cosmographia*, it is clear that cities participated in the construction of their own self-image as the city’s trade status was continually accentuated.

**DIEBEL’S LÜBECK**

In 1552 the local Lübeck artist Elias Diebel designed an image of Lübeck, now titled *The Great View of Lübeck from 1552* [Figs. 1.32-1.35].\(^3\) Diebel’s oversized

\(^2\) Ibid, p. 131
woodcut of Lübeck is the largest urban image of the city ever to have been printed, measuring sixty-nine by 332 cm. across twenty-four folios. The print represents Lübeck as a coastal panorama, showcasing the city’s beloved monuments and majestic urban fabric. This Lübeck city view has become synonymous with its self-image branding as the free imperial, patrician-run, well ordered, and economically stable Head of the Hanse.

Like all earlier pictorial representations of Lübeck’s urban spaces, the View of Lübeck is situated along the Wakenitz canal from an imaginarily elevated position at the northeast on the Falken peninsula. Diebel represents a physically impossible view, which gives the viewer access to seeing and experiencing Lübeck and visually connects the city to its economic prosperity and mode of cultural transfer. The oversized sun sets at the left edge of the print, and monuments are placed on axis from south to north: the seven church towers of the city, the Cathedral (3), St. Giles (5), St. John (6), St. Peter (7), St. Mary (9), St. Catherine (10), and St. Jacob (11), pierce the billowing clouds [Fig. 1.33]. An additional textual box identifies the Cathedral as the “The first church built in Lübeck” (“Die erste Kirche in Lübeck gebauet”). Diebel’s design condenses these main monuments between the two gates, Castle Gate (15, 16) on the right and Mill Gate (1) on the left [Fig. 1.34], where goods and people enter the city. ²¹⁴

²¹⁴ Completion of Mühlentor in 1551 is often called a “Renaissance form.” In Gustav Lindtke, Alte Lübecker Stadtansichten (Lübeck: Museen für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, 1968), p. 3.
Diebel employs two representational modes in his view to show Lübeck legibly: the monuments are in profile, and urban streets are in oblique view. However, the monuments are rotated, enlarged, and placed in profile atop the exaggerated hill. As a result of this spatial manipulation, Diebel’s View portrays a symbolic view of Lübeck, in which St. Mary Church (labeled as Unser lieben Frauen Kirchen) appears disproportionately enlarged at the center of the composition. Additionally, St. Mary is rotated to show the north side of the church. Yet, from the artist’s true vantage point from the northeast, the eastern choir would be the only visible part of the monument. From the physical position on the Falken peninsula, one can neither see the choir of St. Mary, nor its north-facing side; only the east side of the towers are visible [Fig. 1.37]. Thus, it is clear that Diebel both followed his predecessors’ position on the Wakenitz and modified the view to glorify the city, his hometown Lübeck.

The view’s constructed composite profile and oblique views assert an eyewitness authority of the artist’s local presence to craft the image in their specificity. This authenticity is further reinforced through the textual identifications of specific monuments and in a flowing banderole through plump clouds and church spires, which asserts the civic identity in Latin: “Lübeck, free imperial city, head of the Wendish Towns and the entire Saxon Hanse” (LUBECA URBS IMPERIALIS LIBERA CIVITATUM WANDALICARUM TOTIUS ANSAE SAXONICAE CAPUT). Such a description perpetuates the reflexive title of the city as the so-called Head of the Hanse.

The original 1552 woodcut is now lost; however, the image survives through later editions, reprinted in 1574: a second hand-colored woodcut in the Germanisches
Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg [Fig. 1.35], and an uncolored woodcut in the British Library, London. Elias Diebel’s son, Hans Diebel, likely reprinted the blocks in 1574 from the 1552 original. The afterlife of Diebel’s print also flourished in the nineteenth century, when several lithograph editions were printed after the British Library’s 1574 impression [Fig. 1.36, 1855]. Furthermore, textual evidence shows that Diebel’s printed view of Lübeck circulated outside the city: the second edition of Diebel’s print from 1574 was acquired by the city council of Danzig (Gdańsk) in that same year.

Evidence of Diebel’s print in Danzig, a sister Hanse city, demonstrates that Hanse cities transferred goods as well as works of art throughout the network. Thus, urban images of Lübeck were in three Hanse cities outside of Lübeck by the end of the sixteenth century: Danzig, Reval, and Stralsund. Period viewers would have likely also made the connection between Lübeck’s urban image and its economic and cultural role in the Hanse, replicated through the city views. The views invite the comparison of Lübeck’s urban monuments and topography to other Hanse cities, which are topographically similar to Lübeck with patrician churches constructed from the same plan as St. Mary. For well traveled Hanse patricians and merchants, who would not only see printed views, but would also physically experience traveling to other cities, which often

216 Reprinted by T.O. Weigel with an accompanying text, Lübeck in der Mitte des sechszehtnten Jahrhundert. Zu der grossen Ansicht von Lübeck in sieben Blättern (Leipzig, 1855). Few changes were made between the 1574 woodcut and the 1855 lithographic copy: the size was slightly enlarged and a box for a collector’s stamp was added in the lower left hand corner.
made their own proud skyline print images, this shared visual comparison through city views underscores wider cultural interactions in the area.

While there is scant archival information on Diebel’s print in the sixteenth century, and no information from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, Diebel’s image sources are quite clear: Bernt Notke’s painted view in the background of his Dance of Death panel from c. 1463/66 and the View of Lübeck in the 1493 Nuremberg Chronicle. It seems unlikely, however, that Diebel had access to Rode’s view of Lübeck in Reval; the altarpiece was in Reval by 1481, and Diebel would have had to travel to the distant Hanse city for visual reference. Yet, all pictorial urban representations of Lübeck render the city in a similar stylized manner—from the same vantage point with a strong emphasis on specific monuments in profile. In other words, Diebel’s, Notke’s, Rode’s, and the Chronicle’s views are all comparably structured to showcase the seven church towers, and most critically the centrality of St. Mary Church.

Diebel’s print has replaced Notke’s as the source of inspiration in sixteenth-century productions of Lübeck urban images. The View of Lübeck in Braun and Hogenberg’s Civitates orbis terrarum [Fig. 1.38] undoubtedly looked toward Diebel, not Notke, to visualize the city. Civitates orbis terrarum, a printed atlas of city views, appeared in Cologne in six volumes from 1572-1617. The View of Lübeck in volume one of this large-scale printed geography book borrows Diebel’s image in its design and composition: Braun and Hogenberg’s print uses both profile and oblique representational modes to depict the city, placing the main monuments, which are labeled to aid identification, on top of the hill. In addition, St. Mary and other monuments are enlarged
and rotated nearly identical to Diebel’s original design. The inscription below the image identifies the city as both free imperial and part of the Hanse: “Lübeck, Free imperial city, head of the Wendish Towns and the famous Hanse Trading Company” (LVBECA VRBS IMPERIALIS LIBERA CIVITATUM WAN/DALICARVM, ET INCLYTAE HAN-SEATICAE SOCIETAS CAPVT).

The position from the northeast on the Falken peninsula clearly became the vantage point to capture the city. Diebel’s view differs from his predecessors, however, in its combination of the profile and oblique representational modes. The oblique view allows for greater detail of the streets and daily life in the city. The streets wind up toward the top of the hill, showcasing the city that has been densely built up since the fourteenth century. In the foreground on the water, locals are represented in labor—merchants on small flat-bottomed boats and laborers near the mill—and the extensive fauna of the city, including flying birds and diving swans. In short, Diebel beautifies the city, and in doing so, the only visual reference to the Hanse consortium are the Hanse ships at the distant River Trave flowing into Baltic, located on the far right of the print [Fig. 1.39].

Diebel’s composite representational modes make the View of Lübeck legible, and arguably, believable. For that reason, the woodcut has been used to demonstrate what Lübeck looked like in the sixteenth century, specifically to illustrate the Castle and Mill Gates as if Diebel’s print stands as photographic evidence for the pre-modern
construction. What is more, Gustav Lindtke describes the print as “meticulous,” and Friedrich Bruns and Hugo Rahtgens state that Diebel’s image is an “the most valuable image document for the appearance of the city from the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the early modern [period].” In short, the visual language of the profile and composite views, the eye-witness authority of the local artist, and detailed articulation of specific monuments reinforce this view as accurate. Perhaps it is the best pre-modern image that we have in terms of detail, but it cannot be understood as accurate in a documentary sense.

Indeed, Lübeck citizens in the mid-sixteenth century also lauded Diebel’s print as a truthful portrayal of the city. On 8 November 1552—the same year that Diebel’s print was published—the local rector of the Lübeck Latin School Petrus Vicentius (Peter Vietz) orated a civic praise poem (Stadtlob-Gedicht) and used Diebel’s print to illustrate his verbal description of the city. In the civic praise poem, Vicentius lauds Lübeck’s built environment, which the author believes is a direct result of her regional power in northern Germany:

Truly this is the head and the crown of the other cities, which belong to the League of the Wendish Hanse.

218 For example, the seminal series on Lübeck monuments Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler der Freien und Hansestadt Lübeck, Diebel’s print is used to illustrate numerous monuments as a stand in for photographic material in the pre-modern world. In Bruns and Rahtgens, Stadtpläne und -Ansichten, Stadtbefestigung, Wasserkünste und Mühlen, Bd.1, T.1, Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler der Freien und Hansestadt Lübeck.
You see the spires touching the sky above, so you believe that they are attached to the stormy clouds.

Wahrlich ist diese das Haupt und die Krone der anderen Städte, die zum Bund der wendischen Hanse gehören. Siehst du die Kirchturmspitzen den Himmel hoch oben berühren, so glaubst du, sie seien an die stürmischen Wolken geheftet.\textsuperscript{220}

This verbal praise of the city’s monuments parallels Diebel’s pictorial representation. Thus, based on Vicentius’s poem, locals also believed that Diebel captured the spirit or essence of Lübeck.

To be sure, the aim of city views in the pre-modern period was often not to represent just the city as a physical unit (\textit{urbs}), but also the human and religious associations of the city (\textit{civitas}). Richard Kagan frames the idea of the city as a construct, in which the “the aim of [artist] was to capture something of the city’s [human association], and along with it, the particular moral and spiritual values believed to ennoble a city and to accord it a unique place in history.”\textsuperscript{221} In such city views, then, artists who create these views need to represent the physical aspects of the city, as well as its ‘moral and spiritual values’. Artists typically must compromise between what is seen and how the city wants to be represented—in other words, between the \textit{urbs} or \textit{civitas}. However, Diebel’s print balances both the physical and corporate functions of the city.


The 1552 *View of Lübeck* was presumably intended for a local audience who already knew the physical appearance of the city. Yet, Diebel renders the built environment in extreme detail, including the articulation of individual bricks that make up the churches, city walls, and house façades. This view shows the civic, mercantile, and spiritual pride of the city—after all, these concepts fluidly intertwine in Lübeck. Most importantly, Diebel fails to illustrate Lübeck in 1552 as a city in severe economic decline of trade. Rather, like Münster’s print, Diebel’s Lübeck expands to the sea, stressing the economic function of the city. Lübeck must place emphasis on its trade connections in these prints, since it does not have any natural resources but made its wealth through the easy acquisition of resources. In short, Diebel’s Lübeck reads that this is the city that is in your hands.

**CITY VIEWS AS OVERSIZED PRINTED WOODCUTS**

Alongside Lübeck in the fifteenth century, other important European trade cities, such as Venice, Ghent, Cologne, and Antwerp, self-consciously asserted their civic pride through printed civic portraits. These printed city views, however, were neither small scale nor included in a chronicle or geography book. Rather, these were oversized woodcuts, produced as stand-alone works of art to glorify their hometown coastal cities.

Anton Woensam’s *View of the City of Cologne in 1531* [Fig. 1.40; Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett], a print that predates Diebel’s by two decades, has been cited as a source of motivation for Diebel to execute a large-scale city view of his own hometown.
Woensam’s print, comprised of nine folios, was made as a gift for Ferdinand I, who visited the city during the same year 1531 with his brother, Emperor Charles V. Woensam’s Cologne highlights the city’s self-image through a profile panorama along the Rhine. Woensam condenses the city’s historical past and present into one view: the Roman foundations, Ursula’s martyrdom and her relics, as well as the seven Romanesque churches and unprecedented Gothic Cathedral are modified to fit into the detailed view. The patrons of Cologne, Marcus Agrippa, Marsilius, and Empress Agrippina border the city view, thematically continuing the historical narrative of the city. In addition, the Three Magi are situated above the Cathedral, where the relics of the three holy kings are located at the High Altar, and they are dressed in contemporary garb with weapons and flags. Thus, Woensam allegorically connects the holy foundations of Cologne to the historical present: for Cologne, a city with Roman heritage, 11,000 relics from St. Ursula’s maidens, and the Three Kings, the historical and holy legacy can be clearly linked to the Roman foundations and numerous churches.

Similarly, the oversized woodcut of Venice (Venetie) from 1500, designed by Jacopo de’ Barbari and printed by Anton Kolb, juxtaposes a present and historical past of the city [Fig. 1.41]. De’ Barbari painstakingly details a bird’s-eye view of the city across six large sheets. The mythological figures Mercury (god of commerce) and Neptune (god of the seas) reshape the cityscape, so that the main commercial centers of San Marco and

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the Rialto align on a central axis. Doing so, according to Bronwen Wilson, propagates the republican ideals of Venice with her right to the sea to sustain a trading emporium across the Mediterranean. De’ Barbari frames the legacy of Venice through the trade connections and republican ideals.

It is worth mentioning that Diebel’s 1552 View of Lübeck is not a contemporaneous view of the city, like de’ Barbari’s Venice in 1500 or Woensam’s Cologne in 1531. Rather, it is an oversized print made during the rapid decline of Lübeck as the main nodal city of the Hanse network. Its image of a stable city reasserted prestige at a time of diminished prosperity and regional dominance. In this way, Lübeck constructs a trade image to sustain a trade emporium in the Baltic during a time when Danzig, the Dutch, and Atlantic shipping surpassed Lübeck’s stronghold on Baltic trade.

Other northern European coastal cities also produced printed views of their hometowns in an effort to maintain the appearance of stability and prosperity. Pieter de Keysere’s Panoramic View of Ghent from 1524 [Fig. 1.42, Ghent Rijksuniversiteit Print Collection] was commissioned to boost commercial interest in the city during a period of economic decline. Thus, like Lübeck, Ghent locals promoted their city as a way to assuage anxiety over a dwindling population and commercial trade prosperity. De Keysere designed a series of three woodcut prints. The first sheet features a city view of

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226 Ghent was losing population and trade to Antwerp in the first half of the sixteenth century. Ibid., p. 803.
Ghent, accompanied by thirty-one coats of arms; Ghent is identifiable topographically, with its major monuments labeled in Latin. According to Frederik Buylauert, Jelle de Rock, and Anne-Laure van Bruaene, de Keysere’s prints were used to promote political power of a small ruling elite in Ghent. Diebel’s print is comparable to de Keysere’s Ghent: both were produced for a local audience, and both omit the instability of trade at the time of their production.

Two other city views in the Low Countries further demonstrate the range of representations of trade cities in the sixteenth century. For instance, Marcus Gheeraert’s Map of Bruges from 1562 [Fig. 1.43, etching] shows Bruges in an aerial view with emphasis on the city’s beloved civic and religious monuments. However, by 1562, Bruges was in major decline as a trade power in the region after losing its status to Antwerp around the turn of the century. Rather, Gheereart gives prominence to Our Lady's Church, the Belfry, the Burgher’s Lodge (Poortersloge), and the Hanse trading house (Oosterlingenhuis). In contrast to showing an economic city at its moment of decline, the View of Antwerp from 1515 [Fig. 1.44, woodcut] focuses closely on the trade city’s mercantile activities and proximity to the water. Unlike Diebel’s early modern view of Lübeck, which obscures the trade happenings on the River Trave, the View of Antwerp brings trade activities to the forefront of the image: ships are unloading at the docks, Baltic wainscot boards are being dried for inland shipment, and ships of all sizes come and go along the harbor. This image of Antwerp, produced during the city’s height

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227 Ibid.
of economic power in the region, dutifully constructs the city as a bustling economic center.

Lübeck’s self-consciousness status as a trade city is explicitly, albeit falsely, promoted in Elias Diebel’s 1552 printed View of Lübeck. At the end of the fifteenth century, Lübeck had reached the summit of her power in economic strength in the Hanseatic trade and local artistic production. For centuries after this highpoint, Lübeck nonetheless asserted herself as the Head of the Hanse. In Diebel’s print, tension remains between representing Lübeck in 1552, when the print was made, versus capturing the historic commercial and corporate spirit of the city when it was at its height. Indeed, in a letter dated on the 11 November 1585, Georg Braun requested a new image of Lübeck to be reproduced in the next edition of Civitates orbis terrarum, stating that the earlier version was now outdated. As previously mentioned, the view of Lübeck in the Civitates was based on Diebel’s print—so Braun assessed Diebel’s print as being dated. Diebel’s View of Lübeck was printed in Golden Age of cartography, not the Golden Age of Lübeck—so much so that the image of Lübeck had remained unchanged, even after the city witnessed the Reformation in 1531 and lost her strength at sea to the Dutch.

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Lübeck’s city views do not place emphasis on its rulers, its allegiance to the emperor, or its imperial connections. Since Lübeck was a free imperial city, citizens ruled—and this collective ideology also informs the layout, structure, and representation

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228 Sahlmann, Die alte Reichs- und Hansestadt Lübeck. Veduten aus vier Jahrhunderte, p. 52.
of the city’s beloved monuments and urban fabric. City views of Lübeck in both painted and printed form helped construct the city’s urban image as an expression of enduring civic and mercantile pride. These ideas about civic and mercantile identity circulated with the goods, currency, and people throughout the Hanse network.
CHAPTER TWO

MERCHANT ALTARPIECES IN LÜBECK

INTRODUCTION

In the three days leading up Lent, Lübeck was full of Carnival spectacles. From Carnival Sunday to Shrove Tuesday, Lübeck’s elite urban groups staged social order and community through plays, feasts, and parades. Each afternoon during this special week, the playmakers and actors gathered in front of their company houses at noon to climb aboard wagons. The wagon of the Circle Society (Zirkelgesellschaft), followed by the Merchants Company (Kaufleute-Kompanie), processed down Lübeck’s main streets, stopping at set locations to stage Carnival plays (Fastnachtspiele). The plays were likely performed at one of Lübeck’s large town squares from one o’clock in the afternoon until about four o’clock, when the waning Baltic winter light limited outdoor festivities. The celebration culminated on Shrove Tuesday, when a festive parade reached the wine cellar of the city hall (Ratskeller). Hundreds of men and women, forming a raucous crowd, danced, sang, and marched with torches to the Ratskeller, where a ceremony took place with Lübeck’s merchants, patricians, city councilors, and the city scribe.

230 For a full account on the archival evidence on Fastnachtspiele processions, see also: Sonja Dünnebeil, Die Lübecker Zirkel-Gesellschaft: Formen der Selbstdarstellung einer städtischen Obersicht. Reihe B, Bd. 27 (Lübeck: Veröffentlichungen zur Geschichte der
In Lübeck, carnival celebrations were constructed around the collective, not the individual. Carnival was a moment when the city re-staged itself and was put on full display, inviting all townspeople to participate communally in marshaling the republican, corporate identity of the town. To be sure, the social order in late-medieval Lübeck was entirely based upon the collective enterprises of patrician families, mercantile collaboration, and urban corporate groups. Unlike other late-medieval trade cities, large competing firms or families did not dominate mercantile enterprise in the free-imperial Hanse city of Lübeck, nor did administration from the Church or the Holy Roman Emperor. Rather, the city council (*Rat*) governed, and collective groups demonstrated local support and order.

From the last quarter of the fourteenth century up to the Reformation, Lübeck boasted over seventy confraternities, guilds, and brotherhoods—a number that places Lübeck among the largest towns in German-speaking lands, as well as Hanse cities across the Baltic. Comparatively, Hamburg had at most 100 urban groups at the time, Cologne had eighty, whereas smaller cities like Stendal, Greifswald, Jena, and Salzwedel had around ten.\textsuperscript{231} Membership numbers for each urban group in Lübeck ranged from seventy

to two hundred members at a time. It is estimated that Lübeck’s population was ca. 20,000–25,000 inhabitants at the first half of the fifteenth century, indicating that thousands of townspeople participated in one (or more) of the urban groups, so often they belonged to multiple groups simultaneously.

This chapter considers eight urban groups that can be classified into three separate categories: *elite societies* (Circle Society, Merchants Company, Greverade Company), *merchant brotherhoods* (Corpus Christi Confraternity, St. Anthony Brotherhood, and St. Leonhard Brotherhood), and *trade guilds* (*Bergenfahrer* and *Schonenfahrer*). On the one hand, these Lübeck urban groups functioned within the Christian context of late-medieval piety to ensure salvation through daily devotion, *memoria* for the dead, and alms for the sick and poor. On the other hand, the urban groups in Lübeck supplemented a singular religious function to include an occupational dimension: Lübeck urban groups were made up of merchants. Accordingly, the urban mercantile groups crafted a local community for the Hanse traders of local and foreign merchants, such as offering protection for non-Lübeckers living in the city.

The wealthiest city residents were merchants by occupation, and this group held a disproportional amount of political power in the city government. Historian Mike Burkhardt pinpoints the interwoven connection between commerce and council in Hanse cities like Lübeck:

Since the hometowns relied on a wealthy and successful merchant class, and that merchant class made up the backbone of the town councils, the

232 The term “urban groups” refer to all three categories and I will use the period terms to describe subcategories where applicable.

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townspeople were interested in the economic success of as many of their merchants as possible.\textsuperscript{233}

In other words, the typical elite merchant in Lübeck at this time would conduct trade in and out of the city, would belong at least one urban group, and even perhaps would serve on the city council. The urban groups highlighted in this chapter maintained the highest social, economic, and political status, so they had the greatest visibility in town, congregating in their private chapels, commissioning altarpieces, and staging civic rituals to support a shared corporate, mercantile identity and group pride. Taken together, these eight groups can illustrate the complex connections of Lübeck mercantile social order in terms of their shared religious, cultural, and commercial enterprises.

Urban groups commissioned the majority of altarpieces in late-medieval Lübeck: it was the exception, not the norm, for an individual or family to commission altarpieces at this time. Collectively funded and used, these altarpieces were installed in the city’s principal patrician churches and were produced from local workshops as well as from workshops in extraterritorial cities connected through long-distance trade relationships. The leading urban groups in late-medieval Lübeck included numerous members who, on their own, could have never afforded such costly commissions.

The term \textit{merchant altarpieces} designates a new category of altarpieces in Lübeck characterized by the transactional aspects of altarpiece production. These altarpieces were made by and for merchants in Lübeck, indicating that both the patrons and viewers made their living through Hanse trade. The raw materials, image sources, and artists used to

make their commissioned altarpieces were collected from the Hanse trade network across the Baltic Sea, as well as from inland networks to Flanders and Westphalia. Simply put, the altarpieces in this chapter function within the structure of mercantile enterprise as expressions of both religious and economic aspirations of the mercantile elite in the late-medieval city.

Both written and non-written sources inform this chapter. Since the Lübeck merchants staged themselves in various forms throughout the city, I consider the city’s built environment, urban topography, and its use of urban and sacred space in addition to published archival documents by the urban groups. While archival sources provide necessary insight into the specific demographics on membership, occupations, and donation trends, they alone cannot fully connect the visual program of the altarpiece to the commissioning group. Above all, works of art are also documents, having embedded social and economic transactions. The study of altarpieces alongside other source material will thus further the understanding the patronage and reception of merchant

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234 Archivist Antjekathrin Graßmann has published several of the statutes and ordinances of urban groups. The documents in the Lübeck archive (Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck) were taken to salt mine in Bernberg, Sachsen-Anhalt in 1942 for safekeeping. After the Second World War, the Soviets seized and transferred all materials to Riga and St. Petersburg. Most of the material was returned to Lübeck by 2000. Detmar von Lübeck’s Chronik as well as other manuscripts originally in the Bibliothek der Hansestadt Lübeck are still displaced in Armenia. See Antjekathrin Graßmann, “Zur Rückführung der Lübecker Archiv-Bestände aus der ehemaligen DDR und UDSSR 1987 und 1990” in Hansische Geschichtesblätter 110 (1992), pp. 57-70; and Michael North, “Records of Lübeck and Hamburg, c. 1250-1330” in Pragmatic Literacy, East and West 1200-1330, ed. Richard Britnell (Rochester: Boydell Press), pp. 89-93.

altarpieces in Lübeck, and in turn, elucidate the role of the altarpiece in the late-medieval trade city.

**THE CIRCLE SOCIETY**

One of the earliest example of corporate patronage of altarpieces in Lübeck came from the Circle Society (*Zirkelgesellschaft* or *Zirkelbrüder*, “Circle Brotherhood”), an elite company comprised of Lübeck’s wealthiest patricians. This small winged altarpiece, titled as the *Winged Altar of the Circle Society* [*Flügelretabel der Zirkelgesellschaft*; St. Annen-Museum Collection, Figs. 2.1-2.5], was made from Baumberg sandstone and painted oak. It stood as the central shrine in the society’s chapel in St. Catherine Church in Lübeck. The sandstone carving dates to the first decade of the fifteenth century, and it likely originated from Flanders or Westphalia, where such works made from that medium predominated. The Baltic region possesses almost no usable stone for carving or building; rather, Lübeck was comprised entirely of brick architecture, so stone-sculpted objects were rare. This non-local carved stone *corpus* was then fitted with painted oak wings from a separate Westphalian workshop, possibly from Dortmund, a Hanse city with strong ties to Lübeck. The center and wings were then fastened together within an oak casement made locally in Lübeck.

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Based on the inclusion of the members’ coat of arms on the assembled frame [Fig. 2.5], the proposed dating of the altarpiece is from 1429-1431.\textsuperscript{238} The painted coats of arms belong to specific members of the Circle Society: Claus Brömse, Karsten von Rentelen, H[e]inrich Meteler, and Gotschalk von Wickede, who are all identifiable from the Circle Society’s 1429 membership records. Hanging from each family crest is the Society’s emblem: a circle with three intersecting lines. The Circle Society was originally titled the Trinity Society (\textit{Trinitätgesellschaft}). Thus, the three intersecting lines symbolize the Trinity, but also visually recall a compass. The emblem is further repeated multiple times on the sixteenth-century cartulary copy of the original Statute from 1429 of the \textit{Zirkelgesellschaft} [Fig. 2.6].\textsuperscript{239}

Members of the Circle Society, moreover, were required to wear the Society’s symbol every day over their clothes, as represented in the now-destroyed seventeenth-century painted portrait of Gotschalk von Wickede, a descendent of von Wickede [Fig. 2.7]. Circle members were also required to wear a coat (\textit{Mantel, hoyke}), and the eldest members wore flowers.\textsuperscript{240} Wives of Circle Society members were also dictated to wear specific colors of clothing.\textsuperscript{241} Circle Society members were marked bodies on the streets—although average burghers would have certainly been able to distinguish

\textsuperscript{238} The dating is based on the death records of four Circle Society members whose coats of arms were painted on the frame. Werner Jacobsen, “Der Altar der Zirkelbrüder in Lübeck” \textit{Jahrbuch des Zentralinstituts für Kunstgeschichte} 1 (1985): p. 403; Dünnebeil, \textit{Zirkel-Gesellschaft}, pp. 68-70.

\textsuperscript{239} The original Statute from 1429 is now lost. Dünnebeil transcribes the 16\textsuperscript{th}-century cartulary in \textit{Zirkelgesellschaft}, pp. 186-190.


\textsuperscript{241} Ibid.
members based on their patrician status as well.\textsuperscript{242} For these reasons, the Circle Society emblem as well as family crests of the leading members are constantly reproduced to mark the elite status of the group.

To be sure, the Circle Society was the most exclusive urban association in the city from its inception through the Reformation in Lübeck. The Circle Society was founded on 2 September 2, 1379 and was given a small chapel in the Franciscan Friars Minors Church of St. Catherine.\textsuperscript{243} The top of the gate to the chapel features a circle with a compass flanked by two lions. An inscription in Low German was added in 1458 to the gate below the emblem, as well as with text “serkel brodershop” (“Circle Brotherhood”) and the image of the insignia of the Circle Society [Fig. 2.7].\textsuperscript{244}

Since its inception the urban group referred to itself as selschop unde broderschop (society and brotherhood), the Trinitätgesellschaft (Society of the Holy Trinity) and as the Junker, the town nobility who owned land outside the city.\textsuperscript{245} All four appellations, Circle Society, brodershop/brotherhood, Society of the Trinity, and the Junker, indicate

\textsuperscript{242} In Lübeck patrician status is not marked by general sumptuary laws, but in the Statutes of the Circle Society from 1429 and 1436. In ibid., pp. 30-35.
\textsuperscript{243} In the 1429 Statute, it was mentioned that the chapel had already been purchased. Quoted in ibid, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{245} Junker was used frequently in sources in referring to the Circle Society until the 1450s, when the Greverade Company and the Merchants Company were created, and thus, Junker could apply to all three groups, and the term was no longer sufficient to identify solely the Circle Society. Dünnebeil, Zirkel-Gesellschaft, pp. 28-30, 48.
that the group was pious, civic-minded, and cognizant of being a power elite. Indeed, Lübeck historian Carl Wehrmann defined the Lübeck patrician elite as synonymous with membership of the Circle Society.246

The main identity of the Circle Society was thus its elite or patrician status: only Lübeck’s leading patricians, long-distance traders, and city councilors (Ratsherren) belonged to the Circle Society from its inception through the Reformation. Admission to the city council (Rat) was nearly a prerequisite to membership in the Circle Society, since membership to the Circle Society was granted after admission to the city council. Accordingly, members of the Circle Society held most of the seats on the city council. For example, in the fifteenth century, a total of 153 men were admitted to the Circle Society, of which sixty-six of the members sat on the city council.247 This majority is significant, because council members held ultimate local power in a free imperial city, and the Ratsherren were the wealthiest group in Lübeck.

From 1429-1435, the Circle Society had around fifty-five members, and from 1475-1500, around forty brothers.248 Thus, membership peaked around 1430, the same

time as the commissioning of the *Winged Altar of the Circle Society*. Why did the Circle Society commission an altarpiece in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, nearly fifty years after the group’s formation? To begin to answer this question, we must turn to the political turmoil that disrupted Lübeck’s city council from 1408-1416, which also upset the order and influence of the Circle Society.

The first decades of the fifteenth century in Lübeck witnessed dramatic political change. The city was in dire financial crisis from campaigns against pirates and other military operations, so the *Rat* sought to raise taxes.\(^{249}\) In opposition to the city council, a committee of sixty burghers formed in order to oversee the council’s mismanagement and overspending, and among other things, they demanded a new council. Throngs of Lübeck citizens threatened to attack the council’s annual procession in 1408. Several town councilors were forced to flee the city, first to Mölln and then to cities where they had relatives or business partners in Bruges, Hamburg, or Lüneburg.\(^{250}\) From 1408-1416, the exiled Rat members appealed to the Hanse *Kontor* in Bruges, and new *Rat* members attempted to pay off the old council’s debts.

Stability was eventually restored in Lübeck in 1416, and by 1418 Hanse Diets (*Hansetag*e) in Lübeck resumed. When the new *Rat* reconvened in 1416, it included twenty-seven members who combined to select old councilors, new council members, and members who were neutral during the 1408-1416 uprising.\(^{251}\) Historian Rhiman


\(^{250}\) Rotz, “The Lübeck Uprising of 1408” p. 12; and Potter “Social Networks,” p. 41.

Rotz suggests that the uprising was directed at a particular faction of the Lübeck council, not at a socioeconomic group within the elite, such as old-money merchants, new money merchants, landholders, or artisans. In other words, this was not a crisis from social tension or class warfare, but about policy from the older politicians to raise taxes and to expand land holdings outside of the city. Ultimately, the uprising demonstrated the strength of the Lübeck council to respond to the needs and demands of its citizens. As a result, the uprising made the town more commercially- and town-oriented, so that power was consolidated to Lübeck urban landholders and merchants.

This uprising is important for understanding the demographics of the Circle Society, since 97% of Circle Society members were in exile. In other words, all but one of the exiles were Circle Society members. It seems that the Circle Society quickly adapted to the temporary turmoil in Lübeck, because there was little change in the relationship between the council and the Circle Society after the uprising. However, this momentary unrest in Lübeck certainly would have had an impact on the council members and the Circle Society after the restitution of the Council in 1416.

The end of the uprising was celebrated by a parade on 15 June 1416, the Tuesday after Trinity (am Dienstag nach Trinitatis), in which a procession of council members marched throughout the city. The mayor (Bürgermeister), old and new council members,

252 Ibid.
253 Ibid., p. 33.
254 Ibid., p. 27.
255 Rotz, “The Lübeck Uprising of 1408,” p. 27; Dünnebeil, Zirkel-Gesellschaft, p. 78 has names of Circle Society Members exiled.
256 From 1426 to 1450, the council was made up of 85% merchants. Rotz, “The Lübeck Uprising of 1408,” p. 31.
and Junkers (“jonckhere, dede myt deme olde rade hadden utghewesen”) marched together from the St. George Chapel (St. Jürgen-Kapelle), to St. Mary Church, and toward the town hall (Rathaus). Stability and order staged itself through this civic procession in Lübeck, in which the city’s elite marched united with council members, merchants, and Circle Society members. The city refashioned itself amidst turmoil that threatened its republic virtues and mercantile enterprises.

In the late-medieval era, artistic production flourished in periods of both economic depression and prosperity. Within this historical framework we observe the Winged Altar of the Circle Society. The group reorganized itself in 1429—nearly fifty years after the foundation of the group—with their first statute, the donations of lamps, and the commissioning of the altarpiece. Sonja Dünnebeil argues that the new Statute of 1429 marks a shift in the self-conception of the Zirkelgesellschaft to become a devotional organization in addition to a social club. Wim Blockman’s study of the patrons of Hans Memling demonstrates that Flemish elites converted their identity and status into symbolic capital, namely through the support of various artistic forms. In the case of Lübeck in the first half of the fifteenth century, it seems that the burghers, patricians,

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257 Dünnebeil, Zirkel-Gesellschaft, p. 77.
merchants, and councilmen invested in the town’s artistic capital to compensate for the tumultuous period of the exiled council.

Werner Jacobsen proposes that *Winged Altar of the Circle Society* was commissioned as a reflection of the ties between the patricians and city council, in which both groups fought over patrician rights during the first half of the fifteenth century.\(^{261}\) The members of the Circle Society, Brömse, Rentelen, Wickede, Meteler, whose family crests are prominently displayed on the altarpiece itself, ordered the sandstone relief and painted wings for Lübeck.\(^{262}\) Notably, two families who funded the altarpiece, Claus Brömse and Gotschalk Wickede, were exiled.\(^{263}\) Conversely, Karsten von Rentelen, whose family crest is on the Circle Society Altarpiece, was noted as supporting the new council in 1415.\(^{264}\) Even though the specific amount or means to acquire the painted panels and stone-carved painted relief is not listed in the donation book, donations by specific members were a common occurrence for the urban group.

The *corpus* of the *Winged Altarpiece of the Circle Society* is made from a single block of sandstone, an unusual material for a *corpus* of an altarpiece in Lübeck. The material of the *corpus* was doubtless foreign to the region, so this selected material resulted from the long-distance connections and trade activities of its patrons to Flanders or Westphalia—two regions with close links to Hanse merchants in Lübeck. In the polychromed stone shrine carved in shallow relief, painted stone figures cluster into

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\(^{262}\) Dünnebeil argues that these four men donated funds for the altarpiece. See Dünnebeil, *Zirkel-Gesellschaft*, p. 69.

\(^{263}\) Ibid., p. 78.

\(^{264}\) Rotz, “The Lübeck Uprising of 1408,” p. 16.
individual scenes under a starry sky [Fig. 2.2]. The corpus represents a condensed, multi-figured narrative of the Death of Christ with the Crucifixion in the center, flanked by angels. To Christ’s right is the Bearing of the Cross and St. Christopher, who bears Christ himself, enclosed in an urban town gate. The Entombment and Ascension occupy the left side of the altarpiece. Stone carved vegetation encircles the central shrine, a motif repeated in paint on the wings of the retable. The narrative of the Death of Christ certainly was an appropriate iconography for its intended home in the Franciscan Church of St. Catherine in Lübeck. The density of the corpus resembles a procession itself, encouraging collective participation within the group; the crowded scene inflects meaning on group mentality in this elite society. The iconography of the Death of Christ and the Life of Mary points to the concern of the members’ spiritual well-being.

The painted wings represent the Life of Mary in eight scenes with intense gold leaf backgrounds and opulently colored figures [Fig. 2.3]. The content of painted scenes derives from the standard iconography for the holy vita of Mary, based on the apocryphal writings of James and Matthew as well as the Legenda Aurea. The cycle begins with the Annunciation on the top left scene, followed by the Visitation; the tree-lined mountain slopes framing the embrace of pregnant Mary and Elizabeth indicate Mary’s passage through the mountains. The cycle continues on the bottom register with the Birth of Christ, set in a stable indicated by the inclusion of an ox and ass behind Mary. Joseph crouches in the foreground, and Mary is shown in bed with richly decorated textiles. Also behind her Mary recalls the Hortus conclusus, the Enclosed Garden, marked by three trees. The last scene on the left wing is the Three Kings, who are adorned in equally
splendid textiles. The same organization is repeated on the right wing. The Presentation in the Temple begins the cycle with Anna, Mary, Christ Child at the altar, followed by the Preaching in the Temple. Christ sits upon the throne, and Hebrew characters are legible on his book as well as among the circle of scribes surrounding him. The bottom scenes include the Death of Mary and the Coronation in Heaven. In the Death of Mary, the bedding from Christ’s birth is repeated, suggesting a cycle completed. The painted panels on the closed view from its original version are now lost, replaced with eighteenth-century additions [Fig. 2.4].

The finely painted, elegant scenes on the outer wings recall the work of Conrad von Soest (c. 1360–c. 1422), who maintained a workshop in Dortmund. In his home city, Conrad belonged to local confraternities of the Marienkirche and of the Nikolaikirche, which included Dortmund’s most prominent patricians and Hanse merchants. Thus, Conrad maintained a high social status as a painter in the Hanse city of Dortmund, and two of his dated works are documented examples of corporate patronage from urban groups. Conrad’s earliest surviving work, the *Niederwildungen Altarpiece* in the Sts. Maria, Elisabeth and Nikolaus Stadtkirche from Bad Wildungen, is dated to 1403 by his signature and inscription [Fig. 2.9]. The *Niederwildungen Altarpiece* depicts a Crucifixion scene in the center, flanked by two wings made up of four scenes each, featuring cycles from the Life of Christ and the Life of Mary. Local urban groups in the small town of Bad Wildungen commissioned this work, still *in situ*. Around 1420 the

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265 See Dünnebeil for the Circle Society’s activities after the medieval period in Lübeck, in *Zirkel-Gesellschaft*, pp. 212-214.
Confraternity of the Marienkirche commissioned fellow-member Conrad for a painted altarpiece to furnish the Marienkirche in Dortmund, the council and parish church for the leading patrician families of Dortmund [d. 1420, Figs. 2.10-2.11]. The open view depicts three scenes of the Life of the Virgin: a central Death of the Virgin flanked by the Nativity and Adoration; the Annunciation and Coronation on the reverse of the wings offer the closed view. According to Brigitte Corley, Conrad was an expert craftsman who apprenticed in the Parisian court, and he brought to Dortmund an elevated “courtly style” to serve his patrician patrons and peers. The artist’s trademark style can be discerned in his richly brocaded textiles, gold punch work, and colorful and dynamic compositions with naturalistic bodies.

Obvious stylistic and iconographic similarities link Conrad’s painted altarpieces with the painted wings of the Circle Society Altarpiece. In particular, the Nativity scene in the Circle Society Altarpiece and the Bad Wildungen altarpiece show remarkable resemblance [Fig. 2.12] in terms of overall composition. To be sure, the wings of the Circle Society Altarpiece lack the refined painterly craftsmanship of Conrad’s paintings, as the Lübeck altarpiece is devoid of the complex spatial illusionism that is one of Conrad’s hallmark traits. Brigitte Corley asserts that artist of the Circle Society Altarpiece was a “faithful copyist who could not imitate Conrad’s subtle technique or

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The *Circle Society Altarpiece* indicates that a Westphalian-trained master likely executed the wings in the style of Conrad.

Indeed, obtaining a painting in the style of Conrad must have been a deliberate and symbolic move on behalf of the members of the Circle Society, since the Lübeck elite maintained strong connections to Westphalia, in particular to Dortmund. Philippe Dollinger noted that Circle Society was mostly comprised of leading Westphalian immigrant families. By the mid-thirteenth century, one third of inhabitants of Lübeck derived from Westphalia, particularly, Dortmund. Moreover, the patrician elite merchants in the Circle Society correspond identically to the same demographic of Dortmund’s social order and merchant confraternities. For the Circle Society, then, ordering painted panels in the style of Conrad von Soest drew upon the shared Hanse mercantile elite identity in Dortmund. What is more, the painted wings of the *Circle Society Altarpiece* demonstrate the unifying connections through Hanse trade between the mercantile classes. The prestige of the painted wings of the Circle Society relates to the recognition of their Westphalian, Conrad-esque style. After all, the intended viewing community of this work was elite merchants, whose livelihood depended on the ability to discern quality materials.

The Lübeck Circle Society patrons supplemented civic imagery with what did not naturally exist in Lübeck. The city, wealthy by trade, specialized in the mobility of

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capital and could arrange the acquisition of any raw material or finished work through its trade network. The intended local viewing community of these works, moreover, would have likely recognized these materials as imported, so patrons consciously identified differences between painted or carved oak and stone and the quality of Westphalia paintings.

While the stylistic connections between the wings and a Westphalia-trained painter are clear, the origins of the carved *corpus* remain unknown except for the irrefutable fact that the sandstone was quarried outside the region. Two origin theories have been proposed: that the stone carving derives from Flanders, specifically Antwerp; or that it was made locally by an unnamed master from Westphalia. Art historian Hans Nieuwdorp attributes the carved *corpus* of the *Circle Society Altarpiece* to Flanders, based on the local Calvary retable in St. Mary Church in Antwerp, dated to 1384 [Fig. 2.13]. Nieuwdorp argues that the Lübeck carved *corpus* is an example of an early exported product from the Netherlands.

The argument for local production stems from Walter Paatz and Anni Pescatore, who attributed the stone *corpus* to the “Master of the Painted Crucifixion Reliefs” (“der Meister der bemalten Kreuzigungsreliefs”). This unknown master was born in Westphalia, established a workshop in Lübeck or nearby, and then returned to Westphalia.

before his death. To the Master of the Painted Crucifixion Reliefs is also attributed the carved stone corpus of three other Passion scenes in nearby Anklam, Ratzeburg, and Schwerin [Figs. 2.14-2.19]. These three stone carvings across northern Germany are all carved from sandstone and depict multi-figured and polychromed Passion shrines. The Lübeck and Ratzeburg [Figs. 2.15-2.16] shrines feature nearly identical iconographic programs and compositions of the Passion: Bearing of the Cross on the left, Crucifixion in the center, and Ascension on the right. Schwerin [Figs. 2.17-2.18] deviates from this program and replaces the Ascension with a Hell Mouth; there are also fourteen sculpted angels framing the scene, and St. George is represented in the town gate, not St. Christopher as in Lübeck’s carved corpus. Finally, Anklam’s corpus [Fig. 2.19] is oriented vertically, not horizontally like Schwerin, Ratzeburg, and Lübeck; here the Crucifixion dominates the composition, and the scene lacks a condensed Passion narrative.

Even though these works share significant stylistic and compositional similarities, they differ in the overall altarpiece program. Lübeck’s Circle Society Altarpiece is the only altarpiece of the four with painted wings from the fifteenth century.273 Schwerin’s and Ratzeburg’s carved shrines are both flanked by sculpted wings, and the Anklam altar has seventeenth-century painted wings. That is to say, none of the four altarpieces bears any resemblance in structure or iconographic program aside from the carved shrines made from Baumberg sandstone. This indicates that the carved shrines, presumably from

273 The works in Anklam, Schwerin, and Ratzeburg have been restored since the Second World War and feature new polychromy.
the same workshop, where all purchased separately for their intended locations across North Germany, and the chosen Westphalian painted panels by the Circle Society brothers must have been purchased separately. This hypothesis is also supported by the fact that the carved shrine and painted wings of the Circle Society Altarpiece were fastened together in Lübeck. Nieuwdorp’s attribution of the Circle Society carved corpus from Antwerp origins does not account for the other carved shrines in Schwerin, Ratzeburg, and Anklam. Until evidence proves otherwise, it seems plausible that they were all produced by the same workshop given the material, stylistic, and iconographic similarities between these corpus sculptures.

What is certain, however, is that the Circle Society Altarpiece demonstrates cultural transfer from workshops in Westphalia, or possibly Flanders, to Lübeck during the early fifteenth century. As previously mentioned, the connections between the Circle Society and Westphalia, as well as between the group and Flanders, were strong. In this way, works of art, as well as merchants and raw materials, travelled across Hanse trade routes. Art historian Eva Hoffman in “Pathways of Portability” argues that art objects can be defined “along a network of portability extending well beyond fixed geographical sites of production to include the geographical and cultural arenas in which the works were circulated and viewed.”274 In the particular case of the Circle Society Altarpiece, the value of the painted wings and stone corpus is determined by their perceived origins as outside of Lübeck. The altarpiece embodied the trade connections as well as patrician

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ambitions to see their status in an elite style of painting and sculpture. Moreover, these works were integrated into a local context through modifications in media: sandstone fitted with painted panels in Lübeck, and four coats of arms added in the frames. This multi-media combination certainly attests to the mutability of the altarpiece as a complex object of art and devotion, but it also shows how local patrons could alter the altarpiece based on their needs, both material and spiritual.

Perhaps we can also think of the Circle Society Altarpiece as conforming to Gesellschaft. The Circle Society referred to itself as Trinitätsgesellschaft, selschop, and brodershop—that is, Trinity Society, brotherhood and society, respectively. Gesellschaft can be translated into English in both economic and communal terms. Its meaning has more or less remained unchanged since the Middle Ages. In period terms, Gesellschaft was associated with the protection of collective economic interests as well as with words that suggest community, such as love (Liebe), togetherness (Zusammensein), friendship (Freundschaft), association (Vereinigung), and group (Gruppe). Similarly, Brudershaft (brodershop) implies fraternity (fraternitas) and solidarity (sodalitium), also implying community and collective devotional interests. In this way, looking at the small-scale altarpiece performs the collectivity of belonging: the object brings the group together and reinforces common religious and communal bonds. The act of belonging must have been even more important after the return of the exiled council members after 1416, and the installation of the altarpiece in their private chapel united members spiritually and civically.
Located in a side chapel [Fig. 2.8], the *Circle Society Altarpiece* would not have served a liturgical function by the clergy, but rather would have been used for the private devotion of its members. The Circle Society’s chapel, located at the northwest corner of St. Catherine Church, was visible from both the aisle and nave, as the first chapel to the left as one entered the church. The chapel served as a daily space for members of the Society to convene for daily mass, especially for Sunday and holy day prayers and for remembrances of deceased members.\(^{275}\) The private chapel for the Circle Society encompassed the group’s spiritual and corporate ambitions: it was a space for late-medieval piety as well as the space that separated the group from other urban collectives in the city. The Merchants Company also convened for prayer service at the Catherine Church, but did not have a private chapel; and the merchant brotherhoods—Corpus Christ Confraternity, St. Anthony Brotherhood, and St. Leonhard Brotherhood—all convened at the Dominican Church (*Burg*).

The Circle Society visibly marked their private chapel with their emblems, both on the altarpiece and on the chapel entrance. According to Wolfgang Erdmann, the interior of the chapel would have been visible from the Königstraße and Glockengießerstraße due to the large exterior windows, and possibly the location of the altarpiece itself on the east wall.\(^{276}\) Notably, the location of the chapel in the northwest corner is the farthest space from the altar, deemed the most sacred space in terms of late-medieval piety. Presumably, the placement of the chapel in St. Catherine Church gave the

\(^{275}\) Dünnebeil, *Zirkel-Gesellschaft*, p. 50.

patrician members easy access for travel between the Circle Society’s house and their private chapel in the Franciscan Church. The proximity between the chapel, the Circle Society’s house, and Koberg Square next to St. Jacob’s Church indicates that Lübeck patricians were very well aware of using the urban space of Lübeck for staging civic ritual, processions, and display [Figs. 2.21-2.22].

Finally, we can further see how the Circle Society oriented themselves to their patrician identity in the now-lost Baking Pans from 1453 [Fig. 2.20]. These works survive only from a seventeenth-century drawing.277 The ceremonial baking pan is two-sided, featuring thirty-two coats of arms of Ratsherren and Circle Society members.278 The front of the pan features two circular patterns with sixteen coats of arms and an inscription around the edge of the plate: ANNO DOMINI M:CCCC LIII. GODT BEWARE THO LVBEKE DINEN RADT, DE BORGER DARSULVEST VOR ALLE QWAT (In the year of the Lord 1453, God saves Lübeck, whose Council represents the citizens for all). The design is repeated on the verso of the pan with the coat of arms from sixteen other members and the inscription LVBEKE ALLER STEDEN SCHONE, VAN RIKER EHRE DREGHEST DV DE KRONE (Lübeck, most beautiful of all cities, yours is the crown of the great glory). This parable references the city’s status as the Queen of the Hanse, and together with the coats of arms from the city’s elites, connects the republican virtues of Lübeck with mercantile status, as the city’s most important

278 Dünnebeil has identified all of the coats of arms, Zirkel-Gesellschaft, pp. 132-133; and ibid., “Zur Bedeutung,” p. 19.
members are represented together. Indeed, this is the prerogative of the most urban elite
group in Lübeck, the Circle Society: power is greater in numbers, strength is consolidated
through solidarity, and filial piety also serves the city. And as we will see in the next
section, the Circle Society makes these notions explicit during its Carnival plays.

LÜBECK’S ELITE URBAN GROUPS & CIVIC RITUAL

Alongside the Circle Society, two other urban groups in late-medieval Lübeck can
also be categorized as elite societies: the Merchants Company (*Kaufleute-Kompanie*), and
the Greverade Company (*Greveraden-Kompanie*). Both the Merchants Company and
Greverade Company formed in the 1450s. Taken together, these three groups functioned
as the city’s most exclusive corporations with the highest accumulation of wealth, power,
and social prestige in the city. After the foundation of the Merchants and Greverade
Companies, the three groups coordinated to command the largest number of *Rat* seats of
any other urban group in the city, but they also staged annual Carnival festivities together
until the Reformation.

Following the Circle Society, The Merchants Company (*Kaufleute-Kompanie*)
was the second most elite corporation in Lübeck. Hinrich Castorp, who would later
become mayor of the city, founded this group in 1450 in direct competition with the
Circle Society. Castorp was denied membership to the Circle Society, and he sought to
find an alternative urban elite group for the new-money merchants.\(^{279}\) Thus, the name of

the Merchants Company derives from its function: to organize merchants. More specifically, the group comprised regional and long-distance merchants from trading companies who recently acquired wealth from Hanse trade. Membership to the Company was limited to thirty. Castorp was eventually admitted to the Circle Society in 1452, and as a result, the newly-founded Merchant Company quickly aligned itself with the Circle Society.

The grandson of the Company’s founder Engelbrecht Castorp wrote the Statute of the Merchants Company in 1500. Antjekathrin Graßmann, the former head archivist at the Hansestadt-Archiv Lübeck, published a copied version of the Statute; the original is now lost, but the copied version faithfully recorded the original Statute. Graßmann’s transcribed and published version provides the most comprehensive insight into elite societies in late-medieval Lübeck. Graßmann’s analysis of the Merchants Company Statute shows that while the Company was founded as an alternative to the Circle Society, there was little difference in status between the two elite organizations. According to the 1500 Statute, the Merchants Company modeled their urban association after the older, more prestigious Circle Society in terms of membership, ordinances, and processions. Moreover, the Merchants Company also convened at the St. Catherine

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281 Antjekathrin Graßmann transcribes and reproduces the Merchants Company Statute in “Die Statuten der Kaufleutekompanie von 1500” *ZVLGA* 61 (1981): pp. 22-36. The original Statute was lost during the Second World War.
Church like the Circle Society, but neither owned a private chapel nor commissioned an altarpiece.282

The third elite society in Lübeck was the Greverade Company (Greveraden-Kompanie) and was founded around 1450, presumably around the same time as the Merchants Company.283 This elite society was not a confraternity or brotherhood, but a company for long distance traders in Lübeck.284 Its name comes from the founders, who were a merchant trading family, the Greverades—the same family who commissioned Hans Memling in 1491 to furnish their private chapel in the Cathedral with a double-winged painted altarpiece.285 Heinrich Greverade (d. 1468/9) is listed in the 1455 council as “the name-giver of the Company” (“der Namengeber der Kompanie”).286 The other Greverade family members were great merchants in long-distance trade, particularly from Sweden and Flanders. Comparable to the size of the Merchants Company, membership hovered around thirty: in 1489 the Greverade Company had thirty-three members, and in 1504, thirty-four.287

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282 The Merchants Company founded the Singer Chapel (Sängerkapelle) in the choir of St. Mary Church, located behind the main altar. Both Castorp and the Greverade furnished the chapel through individual private donations, though there are no extant works of art. Graßmann, “Die Greveradenkompanie,” p 112. See also Max Hasse, Die Marienkirche zu Lübeck (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1983), pp. 75-90.
283 The first mention of this urban group is 1462. Graßmann suggests a foundation date around 1450, in “Die Greveradenkompanie,” p. 112. This is also supported by Simon in “Schauspiel,” p. 209. The Ordnung von 1490 lists members of the group, including males and females, from 1476-1539, republished in Graßmann, “Die Greveradenkompanie,” pp. 132-133.
285 On the personal donations and furnishings of the Greverade Family chapels in the Cathedral and St. Mary Church, refer to Chapter Three.
Like the Merchants Company, the Greverade Company was founded to facilitate professional connections, not spiritual ones. In the 1489 Ordinance of the Greverade Company, the group refers to itself only as “company” (kumpayne) and later as “society” (selschop), but never “brotherhood” (brodershop). Accordingly, the Greverade Company did not furnish chapels; rather, the Greverade Company served to connect Hanse trade members. Nevertheless, members of the Greverade Company also joined the Circle Society and Merchants Company; the former fact indicates that these men were members of the Rat, and the latter indicates that they were highly networked Hanse merchants.

The interwoven relationships between these three groups can be measured by the close proximity of their company houses [Figs. 2.21-2.22]. The Circle Company house was located at 27 Breite Straße until 1479, then moved to 21 Königstraße, next to St. Catherine Church, the site of their chapel and altar. The Merchants Company was housed at 25 Breite Straße, then moved to 6 Breite Straße in 1495. In 1462 the Greverade Company used a house at 32 Schüsselbruden, and then purchased a house on Königstraße 73 at the corner of Hüxstraße in 1497. The placement of the three company houses in the center of town underscores their prominent civic and mercantile positions. However, these three elite urban groups used the entire city as a stage for plays and processions.

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The Circle Society, Merchants Company, and Greverade Company demonstrated their status through urban ritual to marshal a collective spirit. Undoubtedly the largest impact of the three elite society groups was civic ritual. Unlike Cologne or Nuremberg, there were no imperial processions or entries in Lübeck. Rather, carnival and other civic-led processions were the only times that the city participated in public rituals. Moreover, civic ritual was a time when burghers and patricians conformed and showed allegiance. These public events were often controlled not only by the religious liturgical calendar—which is typical for religious confraternities in the late medieval town—but also by the mercantile calendar. In other words, more events took place during the seafaring off-season between St. Martin (11 November) and Easter, when the weather impeded easy sailing across the seas. For example, the Greverade Company Book identifies drinking, festive meals, and meetings only from Christmas to Easter. According to the Statute of 1500 from the Merchants Company, the members of the Merchants Company and the Circle Society celebrated Carnival, the Popinjay Shoot, the May Count (May 1), and the Feast of St. John together. In addition to these coordinated civic events, each group also celebrated other events on its own. For instance, the Circle Society held its main festivities at Carnival and on Trinity Sunday (the Sunday following Pentecost), and also arranged for a small

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290 Here I follow Peter Burke’s definition of ritual as “action to express meaning, as opposed to more utilitarian actions and also to the expression of meaning through words or images” in Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1994), p. 180.


feast in the summer. The Merchants Company Statute mentions festivities at St. Martin (11 November), Christmas, May Count (typically an election day for urban groups), and a summer feast. The Greverade Statute from 1490 mentions celebrations also on St. Martin’s Day, Christmas, and Carnival, as well as festivities on the Friday proceeding Reminiscere Sunday, the second Sunday in Lent. From the statutes and ordinances of each elite society, it is clear that festivals and urban rituals in Lübeck were coordinated similarly; despite being three separate groups, they demonstrate a shared ritual and visual culture. Members’ wives and widows were also allowed to participate in events.

Documentary evidence describes festive meals, ceremonies, and Carnival plays (Fastnachtspiele) during Carnival, held by the Circle Society, the Merchants Company, and the Greverade Company. Carnival—occurring in the early spring, a time when the cold, icy waters of the Baltic and North Seas prevented easy mobility—was the most popular urban celebration in the city. According to Anu Mänd, Carnival was a low working period with good opportunities for fraternization with other merchants. In other words, this off-peak trade time provided ample opportunities to socialize and discuss business and diplomacy. In Baltic cities like Riga and Reval, urban groups

295 Ibid.
296 Ibid., p. 97.
organized Carnival festivities and plays, and in Nuremberg the ostentatious Schembart festival (*Schembartlauf*) completely overtook the city.\(^ {297}\)

Carnival tradition in Lübeck was exceptional though. Historian Eckehard Simon notes that “nowhere else in pre-Reformation Europe can one reconstruct Carnival theater with the wealth of organizational detail as in Lübeck.”\(^ {298}\) In late-medieval Lübeck, Carnival plays (*Fastnachtspiele*) occurred for nearly an entire century from 1430-1515, with increasing frequency after 1480, and were written and performed by the same people who ran the city council and ensured is mercantile prosperity.\(^ {299}\) Documentation on Carnival plays from Circle Society (since 1430) and the Merchants Company (since 1450) confirms that these groups worked together to stage performances. The Circle Society set the local standard for Carnival plays: they organized, wrote, and staged seventy-three Carnival Plays from 1430-1515. However, they were all organized to

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mirror the Circle Society’s program and schedule, but not to conflict with the older Society’s program. The Greverade Company archive books provide no mention of this annual event, but choristers from the cathedral came over to sing at the Greverade Company House.300

Historian Sonja Dünnebeil has identified the members of the Circle Society who served as the group’s playmakers.301 Members often served as playmakers multiple times, which suggest that these members had literary talent. Both the Circle Society and Merchants Company elected their playmakers between Christmas and the Epiphany.302 The playmakers were responsible for writing, rehearsing, and directing the plays for four performances on the Thursday before Carnival, Carnival Sunday, Monday, and Shrove Tuesday.303 It was not a small undertaking, and Simon suggests that the playmakers’ names were consistently recorded because the task was deemed “a chore, and the membership was not eager to serve.”304 Accordingly, the task was typically assigned to young members of both the Circle Society and Merchants Company, and required no more than twelve members to perform.305

300 Simon concludes this after finding no ordinances on Carnival plays, or no mention of “borch” (wagon), as he found in both the Circle Society and Merchants Company statutes. In “Schauspiel,” p. 210, and “Moral plays,” pp. 438.
301 From 1430 to 1515 there were 295 playmakers from 129 Circle Society members. Dünnebeil, Zirkel-Gesellschaft, p. 99-101.
303 Ibid., p. 58.
304 Ibid., p. 61.
305 Ibid., pp. 63-64.
Simon also estimates that over 140 Carnival plays were mounted by Lübeck merchants in the late medieval period. Only one play in its entirety survives: *Heselin*, performed in 1484, and is preserved in a later print likely from the early sixteenth century. *Heselin* is listed in the administrative book as “On Justice” (“van der rechtverdichteyt”), and the plot involves a father on his deathbed asking his three sons and the wise fool Heselin to search for Justice. As they fail to find Justice in any social class and throughout the world, they turn inward to themselves (“Justice is hidden in ourselves” / “Rechverdichkeyt is in uns sülven vorborgen”). The surviving text contains 338 verses and fourteen parts, indicating that the Carnival plays were short and meant to be learned quickly.

From the Circle Society’s seventy-three Carnival plays between 1430-1515, the plays shift to moral and political content in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. In particular, the titles reinforce the city’s self-fashioned identity as a Hanse, free imperial, trade city: “that lucky Council” (“*dat lucke radt*” 1441); “true nobility resides in the virtues of the heart” (“*wor de recht adel inne is, also entliken in den dogedem*” 1483);

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309 Søndergaard and Simon summarize the play topics, which include: classical history, the Bible, epics on Charlemagne and heroes of the Arthurian cycle, courtly novellas and narratives, animal fables, moralities, proverbs, and political incidents. Søndergaard, “*Fastnachtspiele*” p. 170; Simon, “Moral Plays,” appendix pp. 441-442.
“where violence rules, there is no justice” (“wor walt is, dar is recht ute” 1488); “three principles serve to maintain the welfare of the country: good planning, clear judgment, and loyalty” (“dree puncte holden eyn lant yn eyn gud bestant, als wol vorseen, unterschet unde truwe” 1489); “the play was about whether the wisdom of old people is better than the strength of the young” (“Dat spyl was, wer beter were der olden wysheit wen der jungen sterke” 1490); “the play was about the arrogance of princes and lords” (“dat spyl was van overlaede der forsten unde heren” 1491); “… the play was about unity” (“… dat spel was van der endracht” 1492); and “how the nobles were led astray by the scoundrels of the Guard (“wae de adel vorleydet wart van den schelken ueth der garden” 1500).310 These titles suggest that the content of the plays was meant to support the city’s mercantile elite in their quest to do what is good for the welfare of the city.

Historian Leif Søndergaard notes the importance of the plays’ subject matter to convey values aligned with the mercantile elite, as well as the importance of entertainment and satire to craft a common identity among townspeople.311 The titles also indicate that the playmakers were young, learned, and highly literate members of the urban elite, conscious of framing the citizens of the city in line with patrician ideologies, in support of the laity and council over the clerical or imperial authority. However, that is not to say that the young councilmembers responsible for organizing, writing, and staging the Carnival plays did so without the approval of the older members of the Circle Society.

310 Simon, “Organizing and Staging,” pp. 71-72; Potter, “Social Networks,” p. 44; a complete list of authors and titles for the Zirkelgesellschaft is published in Dünnebeil, pp. 198-204.
The senior members of the groups previewed the script the night before the first performance, indicating that the older members approved the content. As Simon notes, this preview suggests a mere courtesy, since there would not have been any time to implement changes to the content before the first performance the following day.\textsuperscript{312}

Indeed, most urban processions were organized and put on by civic authority, demonstrating and reinforcing the hierarchy of the town. Carnival allowed Hanse merchants to participate in a wider festive culture and to make statements about themselves and their free imperial city.

Plays conducted by the Circle Society and Merchants Company, moreover, also included ceremonies, torch dances, and festive meals in the guild houses and the Ratskeller. The inventory of the Circle Society lists a “Carnival wagon with its furnishings” (“\textit{eyn vastelavendes borch mit erer toberhoringe}”).\textsuperscript{313} Both the Circle Society and the Merchants Company used wagons (\textit{borch}) to stage their annual Carnival plays. The wagon was decorated with furnishings, presumably hand props and costumes for the actors.\textsuperscript{314} The precise duration and location of the plays are not known. We can speculate, based on the northern latitude of Lübeck, however, that the plays must have been mounted in the afternoon, likely in peak daylight hours from noon to four. In terms of locations, we do know that the playmakers and actors convened at the company houses. These Carnival plays were certainly public, and likely mounted in one of the three public squares in the city: Koberg Square, adjacent to St. Jacob Church; the main

\textsuperscript{312} Simon, “Staging and Organizing,” p. 64.
\textsuperscript{313} Ibid., p. 62.
\textsuperscript{314} Ibid.
market square, next to the Rathaus and St. Mary Church; and Klingeberg Square, the open space next to Cathedral. Considering the known facts that the Carnival plays were put on jointly by two merchant groups and involved wagons, it seems highly likely that the plays were mounted in the market square, in close proximity to the company houses, the other merchants’ homes, and the Rathaus.\textsuperscript{315}

The Carnival spectacle also included dancing, drinking, and carrying torches to the beat of drums. Statutes of both the Merchants Company and Circle Society indicate that musical groups were required, and they often named the front and rear dancers of the parade.\textsuperscript{316} On Sunday through Tuesday during Carnival, festive meals were served at the company houses. On Tuesday evening after eight o’clock, members celebrated at the Ratskeller, still in operation under city hall today.\textsuperscript{317} From the Circle Society House on Königstraße 21, the members processed with burning torches in their hands alongside musicians, all uniformly wearing their prescribed coat and golden emblem of the Circle Society.\textsuperscript{318} At Koberg, the Merchants Company would come from their house at Breite Straße 6 to meet the group. Nearly one hundred elite society members with burning torches and music from both the Circle Society and Merchants Company processed towards the Ratskeller. In the Ratskeller, the Circle Society would meet in the “Rose” room, and the Merchants Company convened in the adjacent room, “Linde” [Fig. 2.23].\textsuperscript{319} A celebration was hosted at the Ratskeller rooms, followed by a ceremony with

\textsuperscript{315} Simon, “Moral Plays,” p. 435.
\textsuperscript{316} Dünnebeil, Zirkel-Gesellschaft, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{317} Simon, “Staging and Organizing,” p. 67.
\textsuperscript{318} Dünnebeil, Zirkel-Gesellschaft, p. 109.
\textsuperscript{319} Ibid.
the elite society members, city councilors, and the city scribe. The Greverade Company was also involved in these Carnival festivities at their company house, where choristers from the Cathedral sang, performed sketches, and imbibed Hamburg beer.

Carnival plays were widespread throughout the Baltic region, united not only by Hanse trade ties, but also by language (Niederdeutsch, Low German). Throughout northern Europe and Scandinavia, including Denmark and Norway, as well as Riga and Reval, local confraternities, brotherhoods, and other urban civic groups also staged Fastnachtspiele. These towns were connected culturally, linguistically, and economically, so it is reasonable to assume that the adaption of Fastnachtspiele was another form of cultural transfer throughout the Hanse network. Most significantly, the tradition of Carnival with wagons is not evident elsewhere in German-speaking lands at this time. Wagon-led processions, however, were prevalent in Brabant and Flanders, which suggests that the tradition was brought to Lübeck from the Low Countries, further attesting to close cultural ties to Bruges in particular.

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324 Simon, “Schauspiel,” p. 208. On processions with props and living images in the Low Countries, see B.A.M. Ramakers, Spelen en figuren Toneelkunst en processiecultuur in Oudenaarde tussen Middeleeuwen en Moderne Tijd (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University
In addition to Bruges being a Hanse Kontor city, the exiled Ratsherren were also based in Bruges from 1408 to 1416. Carnival traditions in Flanders involved morality plays, wagon-led processions, and were organized by the town’s young men. Bruges was home to the Holy Blood Procession, a religious festival processing the relic of Christ’s Blood that used wagons to increase visibility. In this civic spectacle in the Low Country, the drama was staged in multiple points across the city, resulting in what Mark Trowbridge calls a transformation of the city into theater; even Petrus Christus decorated wagons for the procession in 1462-63. In Flanders outside Bruges, Ommegang floats appeared in Antwerp in 1398, and Louvain and Mechelen in 1401. According to Meg Twycross, by 1500 there were over sixteen pageant cars in Louvain and twenty in Antwerp.

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328 Twycross, “Flemish Pageant Cars,” p. 16.

329 In Antwerp, Dürer saw the procession in 1520 and remarked that it took over two hours for the Ommegang to pass. Ibid.
Lübeck play organizers and entertainers must have been very impressed by such moving spectacles hosted in numerous towns across the Low Countries. It seems highly plausible that the Carnival play and pageant tradition was based on local Flemish customs, especially considering that fact that Carnival plays in Lübeck were first mounted by the Circle Society in 1430, after their return from Bruges and around the same time as the self-fashioning of the group with their new Statute and *Winged Altar*. Given the widespread nature of court pageantry and civic festivals and plays staged in Flanders, knowledge of these traditions was certainly in Lübeck.

Carnival plays and festivities were urban rituals, a moment when daily routine is momentarily suspended, which is also remarkable given the fact that the leading urban groups in Lübeck organized, produced, and starred in the Carnival plays across multiple days. Carnival as well as other rituals in the city supported urban solidarity and prestige, simultaneously building and maintaining social and political networks in the town by visualizing the economic and religious links of its members. While Lübeck lacks visual sources to support its textual Carnival accounts, nonetheless it is clear that these civic rituals affirmed extraterritorial trade connections and reinforced the city’s identity as a Hanse-trade, free imperial city. Ultimately, the civic rituals in Lübeck staged corporate identity in the town: an impermanent time when the Lübeckers paraded, danced, marched, and celebrated together. Yet at the same time, it was also a moment to reinforce the social order as oriented to the members of the elite societies, head merchants, and the *Rat*. These interlocking social groups banded together to celebrate before a new season of trading.
MERCHANT BROTHERHOODS AT THE BURG

Since 2015, the new European Hanse Museum (Europäisches Hansemuseum) has been located at the northern tip of the island of Lübeck on the former site of the Castle Friary Church and Cloister of the Dominicans (*Burgkirche und –Kloster*, often called the *Burg*). This intentional site for the European Hanse Museum underscores the medieval importance of Castle Friary Church and Cloister.330 After the Battle of Bornhöved in Holstein, the city’s burgher class tore down the old fortification and founded the Castle Friary in 1227 as a Dominican cloister dedicated to Mary Magdalene.331 The basic outline of the walls was in place by 1241, and after a fire in 1276, the structure was rebuilt first as a Gothic brick basilica, eventually adding a three-aisled hall choir. In medieval Lübeck, the Castle Friary Church and Cloister served as home to numerous religious and trade brotherhoods of the city, where each brotherhood had its own devotional space with an altarpiece. The Castle Church was demolished in 1874 due to disrepair, so the medieval layout and interior decoration remains uncertain. Yet, we can visualize how the medieval devotional spaces would have been filled with local Lübeckers, both men and


women, and merchants from near and far. At the heart of each chapel was the altarpiece—the work of art commissioned by each group of the merchant brotherhoods for communal use and pride.

Alongside the elite urban societies discussed in the previous sections, the next category of urban groups in Pre-Reformation Lübeck was the merchant brotherhoods. The three most popular and revered brotherhoods were the Corpus Christi Confraternity (\textit{Hl. Leichnams-Bruderschaft} or \textit{Fronliechnamsbruderschaft}), St. Anthony Brotherhood (\textit{Antonius-Bruderschaft}), and St. Leonhard Brotherhood (\textit{Leonhards-Bruderschaft}), all located in the Church and Cloister of the Dominicans, one of seven churches in the city that was supported by burghers and patricians.\footnote{Zmyslony, \textit{Bruderschaften}, pp. 69-88.} These brotherhoods functioned primarily as devotional groups; they convened in their private chapels in the Castle Friary and in members’ private homes. Unlike the exclusive urban societies of the Circle Society, Merchants and Greverade Companies, they did not maintain a group house. However, the demographics of brotherhood members were quite similar to the elite societies: they were predominantly merchants, and some brothers also came from the leading patrician families and served on the \textit{Rat}.

Overlapping and interwoven memberships linked multiple urban groups. The religious function of the merchant brotherhoods complemented the social and professional orientation of the elite societies, since members belonged to both merchant brotherhoods and elite societies simultaneously. For example, Lambert Wittinghoff, who served on the Lübeck Council from 1514-1529, belonged to four brotherhoods in 1520:
St. Anthony, St. Leonhard, Corpus Christi, and St. Rochus. Bernd Pal (c. 1437-1503), who lived in both Lübeck and Reval, was a member of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads in Reval, in addition to St. Anthony, St. Leonhard, and Corpus Christi in Lübeck. These individuals were not exceptional, because concurrent or multiple memberships to the religious brotherhoods at the Burgkloster and other groups was quite common according to the records of membership. Lübeck archivist Antjekathrin Graßmann estimates that out of the forty-three hosts (Schaffern) from the St. Anthony, St. Leonhard, and Corpus Christi Brotherhoods between 1487-1521, twenty-one were also known members of the Greverade Company. These membership records clarify the patterns of memberships to urban groups in the city: members often belonged to more than one brotherhood—indicating that groups had friendly interactions with each other—and the length of membership could last more than one decade. The merchant brotherhoods and the elite urban societies were not mutually exclusive groups, but rather served the various needs of Lübeck merchants in the late-medieval trade city. Historian Carsten Jahnke remarks that the interwoven merchant brotherhoods and the elite societies “constituted a platform for the self-manifestation and self-assurance in Lübeck society,

335 Graßmann, “Einige Bemerkungen zu den geistlichen Bruderschaften in Lübeck,” p. 50. Dünnebeil identifies Kersten Northoff was a member of these four brotherhoods as well as the Greverade Company. In “Kompanien als genossenschaftliche,” p. 206.
which were also part of the larger religious movement.”

Therefore, both urban groups types—confraternity and society—played a crucial role in the economic and spiritual life of the city. Merchants turned to these groups for both everyday devotion and for professional networking but also for to fraternization during off-season trade in the winter months.

Like the elite urban societies in Lübeck, the foundation of merchant brotherhoods dates back to the fourteenth century. Members of the Circle Society founded the Corpus Christi Confraternity on 24 June 1393. Their altar, dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, was purchased in 1409 at the Burg and furnished with an altarpiece in 1497. The Corpus Christi was a popular mode of devotion in northern European late-medieval cities, and Lübeck was no exception; the city supported five Corpus Christi groups, but the Corpus Christi Confraternity at the Burg was reserved solely for merchants. After the political uprisings in Lübeck between 1408-1416, the Confraternity maintained active and uninterrupted membership until the Reformation.

Carsten Jahnke has surveyed the foundation books of the Corpus Christi Confraternity at

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337 Hans Gherwer is listed as a founding member, who was also a member of the Lübeck Rat and Circle Society. Jahnke lists names of the founding members and cross lists them with Zmyslony, p. 40.
338 Ibid.
339 Other Corpus Christi Confraternities were located at St. Catherine, the Cathedral, St. Peter Church, the Holy Spirit Hospital, and St. Jacob. Judith Potter’s examination of Lübeck wills from the fifteenth century also notes the popularity of these groups, yet donations to which Corpus Christi brotherhoods were not specified. Potter, “Social Network,” p. 208.
the Archiv der Hansestadt Lübeck after the documents returned from Russia in 2000.\textsuperscript{341} He determined that since the its formation, the brotherhood included the city’s leading patrician and merchant families: between 1393 and 1520, roughly 2138 men and women were members of the Corpus Christi Confraternity in Lübeck.\textsuperscript{342} The statute claims that no more than 100 members were to be admitted to the group at a time, but this limit was not always enforced.\textsuperscript{343}

The function of the Corpus Christi Confraternity was primarily religious. Like other Corpus Christi groups throughout northern Europe, the Lübeck faction celebrated the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{344} The Confraternity also cared for the poor and deceased members of the town. Members paid the monks of the monastery for a procession in memory of the suffering of Christ at the Burg every Thursday after vespers and in Lent. Jahnke identified ninety-four crucifixes in the Brotherhood’s inventory, likely indicating the use of these objects for public processions.\textsuperscript{345} Despite a lack of documentation about specific processions of the Corpus Christi Confraternity in Lübeck, significant evidence survives about other Corpus Christi organizations in northern Europe participating in urban rituals.\textsuperscript{346} Given the large inventory of processional objects by the Corpus Christi group

\textsuperscript{341} Ibid., p. 203.
\textsuperscript{342} Ibid., p. 221.
\textsuperscript{343} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{344} Ibid., p. 214; Miri Rubin, \textit{Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture} (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991), see esp. pp. 185-195.
\textsuperscript{345} Jahnke, “The Corpus Christi Guild in Lübeck,” p. 211.
in Lübeck, it is highly plausible that this confraternity also participated in civic
processions and rituals, akin to Bruges.

The St. Anthony Brotherhood is comparable to the Corpus Christi Confraternity
in terms of function, demographics, and membership patterns. The aldermen of the
Corpus Christi Confraternity founded the St. Anthony Brotherhood in July/August
1436. Membership numbers were restricted, yet this limit seems to have been only a
formality that was not reinforced; for example, the statue states that no more than 150
men shall be members, yet in 1471 there were 167 members. From its foundation to
1500, there were about 1700-1800 members, including both men and women, although
the men outnumbered the women three to one. In addition, craftsmen and artisans were
banned from admission, and between 1436 and 1523, forty-eight members were
Ratsherren. Therefore, this group, too, was made up of the leading patricians and
merchants in Lübeck, who often belonged to other merchant brotherhoods and elite
societies in the city.

St. Leonhard was founded on 22 July 1458 at the Burg. From 1470 to 1530 there
were approximately 1250 members. Just like the previously founded Corpus Christi

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347 1431 first mentioned and 1436 definitively founded. Carsten Jahnke, “do eten de
sustere unde brodere to hope. Die Koste der St. Antonius-Bruderschaft zur Burg in
Lübeck. Zur Durchführung mittelalterlicher Feste in der Stadt Lübeck” in Das
Geburtstag, ed. by Rolf Hammel-Kiesow and Michael Hundt (Lübeck: Schmidt Romhild,
350 Zmyslony, Bruderschaften, p. 72.
Confraternity and St. Anthony Brotherhood, the St. Leonhard Brotherhood was comprised of the city’s leading merchant families.\textsuperscript{352} In particular, Georg Fink describes the Leonhard Brotherhood as a melting-pot of Upper German (\textit{Oberdeutsch}) merchants and Lübeck merchants with specific connections to Nuremberg and Frankfurt.\textsuperscript{353} The three most popular merchant brotherhoods at the Burg then—that is, the Corpus Christi Confraternity, St. Anthony Brotherhood, and St. Leonhard Brotherhood—banded together through their shared location, devotional focus, and elite mercantile membership demographics. It seems that for admission to one of these three brotherhoods high social status was a prerequisite. Moreover, membership to multiple brotherhoods and elite societies increased the everyday possibilities of mercantile fraternization during the off-season.

The other two urban devotional groups can be classified as merchant brotherhoods: St. Rochus Brotherhood (\textit{Rochusbrotherhood}) at the Cathedral (founded 1511); and the Brotherhood of the Virgin Mary (\textit{Bruderschaft Maria Annuciationis}) in St. Mary Church (founded 1497).\textsuperscript{354} St. Rochus Brotherhood in the Cathedral was named after the Italian plague saint who was increasingly popular in the Hanse cities in the decades before the Reformation, as well as in other trade cities, such as Antwerp.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[353] Georg Fink, \textit{Die Lübecker Leonhardbruderschaft in Handel und Wirtschaft bis zur Reformation} (Lübeck, 1921), pp. 325-370.
\item[354] For the history and demographics of these other brotherhoods, see Zmyslony, \textit{Bruderschaften}, pp. 77-87.
\end{footnotes}
Cologne, and Bruges.\textsuperscript{355} The Brotherhood of the Virgin Mary was closely aligned with the Circle Society and the Greverade Company, so much so that in several earlier sources the Greverade Company falsely became synonymous with the Brotherhood of the Virgin Mary.\textsuperscript{356} These two brotherhoods are excluded from my study of merchant altarpieces in Lübeck for three significant reasons: they are located outside the Burg; they do not share a pattern of communal commissioning of altarpieces; and, most significantly, they do not participate in the shared cultural celebration of \textit{Koste}. Nonetheless, the St. Rochus Brotherhood and the Brotherhood of the Virgin Mary also make up the constellation of mercantile connections in Lübeck through daily devotion and worship.

The largest celebration of the merchant brotherhoods was the Feast of the Visitation (2 July), in which the group celebrated the great banquet of the guild known as \textit{Koste}.\textsuperscript{357} Carsten Jahnke’s publications on the guild ritual \textit{Koste} demonstrate that that this festive celebration binds the three merchant brotherhoods at the Burg together, the Corpus Christi Confraternity, the St. Anthony Brotherhood, and St. Leonhard Brotherhood.\textsuperscript{358} The \textit{Koste} was an annual feast that took place in a member’s private home. Accordingly, this ritual differs from the elite urban group’s staging of Carnival

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{356} Zmyslony, \textit{Bruderschaften}, p. 79-86.
\item \textsuperscript{357} Jahnke, “The Corpus Christi Guild,” p. 217.
\item \textsuperscript{358} Ibid., “Die \textit{Koste},” pp. 97-108; and ibid., “Gott gebe, dass wir alle selig werden mögen” \textit{Die Mitgliederverzeichnisse der Heilig-Leichnams-, St. Antonius- und St. Leonhards-Bruderschaft zur Burg in Lübeck} (Veröffentlichungen zur Geschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck, Reihe B), forthcoming.
\end{itemize}
plays and processions: merchant brotherhoods did not require a guild house for celebrations and assembly, nor did they congregate publicly throughout the streets of Lübeck. However, it is important to not misread Koste as a private affair, because all three merchant brotherhoods, who made up a large percentage of Lübeck patricians, convened to celebrate Koste. Furthermore, each merchant brotherhood coordinated their Koste celebrations. The Corpus Christi Confraternity celebrated on the Feast of the Visitation (July 2). The St. Anthony Brotherhood also celebrated Koste alongside the Corpus Christi Confraternity; their feast was originally held on the Monday after the Visitation (2 July), but was later moved to the Monday or Tuesday after St. Margaret (13 July). From this change in program, we can assume that the St. Anthony and Corpus Christi Brotherhods synchronized events to ensure no double billing—a precedent set by the Circle Society and Merchants Company for their Fastnachtspiele.

The primary function of Koste was a festive meal at a member’s home. According to Jahnke, at the Koste the confraternity by this meal “renewed its own solidarity and spirit and revealed again the position of every person and of the community in the whole society.” In other words, Koste was a moment when members met outside the devotional context of the Burg to discuss politics, marriage alliances, and mercantile enterprises. Since Koste transformed the merchant brotherhoods from a religious confraternity to a socializing fraternity during Koste, it is no wonder that the Corpus

Christi Confraternity suspended their assembly during the exile of the Lübeck Rat from 1408-1416.\textsuperscript{361}

Jahnke surveyed the guild records of all three merchant brotherhoods and determined that the brotherhoods’ homes were concentrated in the center of the city on Königstraße, Schüsselbuden, Breite Straße, and Mengstraße.\textsuperscript{362} Thus, even though merchant brotherhoods assembled for devotion at the Burg, they took their festive celebrations outside the Burg and onto the main mercantile streets. The St. Anthony guild book provides exquisite detail about the types of food, drink, and entertainment consumed at \textit{Koste}, indicating that the lavish event held great importance for the merchant brotherhoods.\textsuperscript{363} The appointed host (\textit{Schaffer}) held \textit{Koste} in his private home—an opportunity to display individual wealth and potentially to conduct new business.

The celebration of \textit{Koste} was one of the many ways that late-medieval urban groups in Lübeck came together to demonstrate allegiance and community. While the annual ritual \textit{Koste} assembled the groups inside the members’ homes, both the Corpus Christi Confraternity and the St. Anthony Brotherhood also sponsored the production of altarpieces for their private devotional spaces in the Burg. In contrast to the earlier Circle Society for their group altarpiece, the merchant brotherhoods at the Burg turned to local Lübeck workshops to execute these retables.

\textsuperscript{361} Ibid., p. 217-218.
\textsuperscript{362} Ibid., “Die \textit{Koste},” p. 100.
\textsuperscript{363} Ibid., pp. 102-107.
**THE CORPUS CHRISTI ALTARPIECE**

The Corpus Christi Altarpiece [Flügelretabel der Fronleichnamsbruderschaft, Figs. 2.24-2.32] was commissioned in 1495 and completed in 1497. The local workshop of Henning van der Heide produced the interior wooden sculpture, and the Hamburg-based painter Wilm Dedeke executed the painted wings of the first opening.\(^{364}\) In the Brotherhood’s account book, this commission is recorded: “In the year of Our Lord 1497 the elders of the Corpus Christi Guild let a new retable be made for the Corpus Christi Altar at the Burg. It cost 431 mark and 8 shilling” ("An(no) 1497 hebben de olderlude maken laten vp der hilgen lichnams altar thor borch ein Nige taffell stunt 431 mk 8ß").\(^{365}\) In period terms, this amount was approximately the value of thirty horses and 129 tons (ca. 3440 kg.) of the highest quality salted cod—thus, an expensive commission for a local, albeit wealthy, collective religious group.\(^{366}\)

*The Corpus Christi Altarpiece* is structured according to the standard Lübeck format—double openings with a carved *corpus*, carved wings, and carved predella. According to Lynn Jacobs, this structure and format of carved altarpieces facilitated depictions of narrative with iconography particular to the patronage group.\(^{367}\) Indeed, such a complex object with multiple openings and media increases iconographic

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\(^{365}\) Quoted in Corpus I, Cat. Nr. 85, p. 280.


permutations. The iconography of this retable engages the religious function of the Corpus Christi group—that is, the worship of the body of Christ and St. John the Evangelist, the dedicated saint of the altar space in the Burg. Through these biblical narratives, the painted and carved images reference particular rituals of the Corpus Christi Confraternity in Lübeck.

The closed view of the altarpiece features four painted panels of individual saints: Christ as Salvator Mundi and St. John the Evangelist in the center panels, flanked by Mary Magdalene and the now-lost Virgin Mary [Fig. 2.27]. The everyday view thus caters to the location of the altarpiece on the St. John the Evangelist altar of the Corpus Christi at the Burg, the Dominican institution dedicated to Mary Magdalene. The Virgin Mary panel was lost sometime after 1708. Each panel is depicted before a naturalistic landscape background and visually united by the same floor pattern, bringing the viewer into the holy space. Painted Latin inscriptions appear below each saint. A workshop assistant of Wilm Dedeke likely executed these four outer panels of the closed view.

The first opening reveals four panels with eight painted scenes [Fig. 2.26]. The four panels of the inner sides relate to the Eucharist, and the four outer panels to Saint John the Evangelist. All scenes are readily identifiable with inscriptions in painted gold below. The outer wings depict the Preaching of St. John the Evangelist, the Awakening

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368 Quoted in Corpus I, p. 280.
369 The inscriptions are: *Jhs salvator noster; S[an]ct[u]s iohannes eva[n]gelista; Maria exemplum penitencie*; and from Melle’s description in 1708 of the now-lost Virgin Mary panel, *Maria speculum innocentie*. Corpus I, Cat. Nr. 86, p. 280.
370 Corpus I, Cat. Nr. 86, p. 282 also assigns other attributed artists of the closed view as Maler des Thomas-Altares and the Meister des Bützower Altares.
of St. John the Evangelist, St. John on Patmos, and the Last Mass of St. John.\(^{371}\) The inner wings read across: the Mass of St. Gregory, the Feeding of Elias, the Communion of the Corpus Christi, and the Meal of King Ahasuerus.\(^{372}\) The polychromed carved predella of the Last Supper is also visible in this second painted view, with Christ and his Disciples framed within an arcade of late Gothic tracery.

Dedeke catered the iconography of the painted view to suit the functions of the Corpus Christi Confraternity and styled the figures in contemporary dress for the members' personal identification. The painted Mass of St. Gregory [Fig. 2.28] shows the pope and Church Father before a painted altar, holding the Eucharist as evidence of the body of Christ above him. His retinue to his left and a cluster of figures to his right are waiting to be saved by hovering angels above the scene. The Last Mass of St. John the Evangelist similarly shows John holding the wafer to the sculpted Crucifix of Christ. These panels self-reference the performed ritual of the Mass by the Corpus Christi Confraternity and also attest to the contemporary popularity of the altarpiece forms.

Dedeke’s panels also resemble the actual rituals of the group, such as the guild ritual of *Koste*. For example, the scene with the Banquet of Old Testament King Ahasuerus [Fig. 2.29] recalls the confraternity’s annual ritual meal.\(^{373}\) The scene depicts

\(^{371}\) The inscriptions are respectively: *HIC BEATVS IOHANNE S POPVLO FIDESXPI; HIC RSVSCITAT DRVSIANAM SIBI DILECTAM; HIC IOHANNES PATHMAS INVLA CONSCRIBIT APOSTOLVS; HIC POST MISSAM INVITATUR AD CELVUM*. Corpus I, Cat. Nr. 86.

\(^{372}\) Latin inscriptions are, respectively: *OFFERTUR IN ECCLESIA PRO VIVIS ET MORTVIS; HELLAS PANE CELICO FORTATVR; EST PRO SALVTE OMNIVM INSTITTVM; ASSVERVS GRANDE FECIT CONVIVAM*. Corpus I, Cat. Nr. 86.

fashionably dressed individuals with lavish textiles and silverware—all elements that would be present during Koste. The multivalence of this scene combines the two spaces of the Corpus Christi Confraternity, Koste in private homes and worship at the Burg, into a single scene to emphasize the rituals that bind the group together. The scene of Ahasuerus seemed to have been an appropriate theme to accompany the feast of a confraternity. Predating the Dedeke panel, the Skåne Shipper Confraternity in Hamburg also boasted a large painting of Ahasuerus at Esther’s Banquet, donated by Richard Rodenbroch in 1476. The painting came from Bruges and is now lost, but it is reasonable to assume that Dedeke and other local North German artists would have been familiar with the iconographic precedent on confraternal celebrations and the Old Testament tale.\textsuperscript{374}

In addition to the representation of the Mass of St. Gregory in the second view, the same narrative serves as the theme of the central shrine \[Fig. 2.24-2.25\]. An inscription runs across the wings and corpus “\textit{O sacred banquet, in which Christ is received in the memory of his Passion is renewed, the mind is filled with grace and a pledge of future glory to us is given in the year 1496.}”\textsuperscript{375} Above the wings and below the tracery reads “\textit{In outline [the Sacrament], in which Isaac is sacrificed.}”\textsuperscript{376} The body of

\textsuperscript{374} It is said to have cost “twelve Rhenish guilders in Bruges, when it was new.” See Werner W. Paravicini, “Bruges and Germany” in \textit{Bruges and Europe}, ed. Valentin Vermeersch (Antwerp, 1992), p. 120.

\textsuperscript{375} \textit{O SACRVM CONVIVVM IN/ QVO CRISTVS SVMITVR RECOLITVR MEMORIA PASSIONIS / EIVS MENS INPLETVR/ GRACIA ET FVTVRE / GLORIE NOBIS PINGVNS DATVR ANNO/ DOMINI 1496.} Corpus Cat I. Nr. 86.

\textsuperscript{376} \textit{IN FIGURIS PR[A]ESIGNATVR CU[M] YSAAC YN [MOLATUR].} Corpus Cat I. Nr. 86.
Christ appears on a carved retable before Gregory the Great. Four wooden images of Old Testament narratives flank the principal image and function typologically to prefigure the Eucharist: Abraham and Isaac at the Sacrificial Altar: the Passover Meal; the Miracle of the Manna, and the Meeting of King Melchisedek and Abraham. The top scenes on the wings are inscribed as “The Passover meal is prepared/Exodus Chapter 12” and “Melchisedek offers Bread, Genesis Chapter 14.” The inclusion of such wooden miniature narratives on the altarpiece wings, common in Lübeck altarpieces, also stemmed from early Netherlandish carved altarpieces, and thus differed, structurally and visually, from the southern German format, which featured iconic figures, not miniature narratives.

According to Adolph Goldschmidt, the Old Testament wing narratives were likely derived from the woodcut illustrations of the Lübeck Bible of 1494 [Fig. 2.30]. The Lübeck Bible, printed by Stephen Arndes in Lübeck, featured original woodcuts from the so-called Master of the Lübeck Bible (Meister der Lübecker Bibel), who came from Flanders, as well as copies of the woodcuts from the Cologne Bible of 1478/9. Thus, the image sources for these carved wooden images further attest to the ability of Hanse trade networks in facilitating the circulation of art and artists in the late fifteenth century.

379 Cologne Bible printed by Heinrich Quentell. Plates from Quentell’s workshop were sent to Anton Koberg in Nuremberg for the Nuremberg Bible of 1483. On the Lübeck Bible, see Matthias Weniger, “Lübecker Arndes-Bibel” in Lübeck 1500—Kunstmetropole im Ostseeraum (Petersberg: Michel Imhof Verlag, 2015), pp. 412-415.
In the central shrine of the Mass of St. Gregory, St. Gregory kneels before a carved retable on an altar [Figs. 2.31-2.32]. The doubling of the altarpiece form is repeated here—that is, an altarpiece within an altarpiece. Christ miraculously bleeds from his wound into the chalice, which further overspills from its holy contents, offering the sacrificial blood of the Mass. A luxurious illuminated manuscript lies to Christ’s right. A clergyman holds a peacock feather in the center of the shrine. Anu Mänd identified peacock feathers in the inventory of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads in Riga to be used at their altar as a liturgical fan, which Mänd suggests was a “manifestation of their wealth and prestige.”

380 The corpus—heavily gilded, richly decorated, and densely occupied—further displays the wealth of the Corpus Christi Confraternity. Moreover, actual objects from the inventory of the brotherhood are included in this carved image, including silver-gilded candlesticks, a canopy, as well as a chasuble and other rich vestments. 381 These sculpted objects, like altarpieces, enabled the Corpus Christi Confraternity to differentiate themselves from other Corpus Christi groups. In this carved corpus, the craftsmanship creates an aesthetic of display, in the aspiration to marshal members together and to show the power of local capital. The Corpus Christi Confraternity was certainly one of the most prominent and wealthy brotherhoods in late-medieval Lübeck, and the high quality and sumptuously carved corpus of its altarpiece correspond to their local status.

It remains unclear as to why the Corpus Christi Confraternity commissioned an altarpiece in 1497, over one hundred years after the group’s foundation. Nonetheless, they selected local artists to construct their named altar in a retable format local to North Germany. Wilm Dedeke (born Lübeck c. 1460; died 1528 Hamburg) became established in Hamburg after he completed the Corpus Christi Altarpiece paintings, when he married the widow of Hans Bornemann, a prolific painter across North Germany.382 Henning van der Heide was born in Lübeck (c. 1460-1521) and trained in the workshop of Bernt Notke. He purchased a house on Königstraße in 1487, and in 1513 he became the Alderman of the Guild of St. Luke (Lübecker Maleramt), to which wood carvers also belonged. Henning executed the central shrine, and his workshop finished the wings. From other records about the production of altarpieces in the city, we know that the painter and sculptor worked closely together, both in the same guild, also alongside carpenters in the carpenter guild (Schnitzergesellen). The altarpiece, depicting a specific iconographic program of painting and sculpture, is doubtless a local product, and for the intended viewing community of the brothers of the Corpus Christi Confraternity, it stood as a visual expression of corporate identity.

**THE ST. ANTHONY ALTARPIECE**

In another altarpiece at the Burg, we can see similar collective aspirations of a local merchant brotherhood. The *St. Anthony Altarpiece* [Flügelretabel der

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Antoniusbruderschaft, Figs. 2.33-2.34] dates to 1520-1522, nearly a generation after the Corpus Christi Altarpiece was installed, and it was dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. In 1520 the Brotherhood members, Kersten Nordhoff, Hans Buschmann, and Gerd Aldenberch ordered a new altar ("enn nyge alterraffelen to der berorden broderschop altare tor Borch"). The altar cost 310 marks. Benedikt Dreyer (c. 1485-1553/55) executed the carvings, Hans von Köln was the painter, and Johann Blankensten and Jasper Schünemann made the casement.

The contract with the artists provides the most complete documentation for altarpiece patronage in late-medieval Lübeck. In the account book of the Brotherhood, the master carpenter Johann Blankensten started construction on the retable case on 5 November 1520, and after twenty-nine weeks, Jasper Schünemann ("sniddeker") finished the altar encasement and predella. The final payment for "Johann von Köln" ("Johan van Collen") totaled 150 Lübeck marks on 6 August 1522 for the "new altar panels" ("de nygen alterrafeln"). Benedict Dreyer ("Benedychtus") was paid across several installments for the sculpture work: eighty Lübeck marks in July 1522 and sixty Lübeck marks on 13 August the same year. Members from the St. Anthony Brotherhood also

384 Graßmann, “Einige Bemerkungen,” p. 49. This amount was distributed among all craftsmen working on this work, including the carpenter, blacksmith, painter, and sculptor.
386 “de bylde in s. Antonius thafeln tho snyden my taller thobehoringe, desulvsten bylde tho vorgulden und tho stofferende myt de ghanßen myddelsten taffeln.” Quoted in Corpus I Cat. Nr. 164, p. 465.
settled both artists’ bar tabs in the city. Also listed in the account book of the Brotherhood, forty-nine wainscot boards were specifically requested (“vor 49 wagenschate”) for the frame, predella, and wings (“tor tafelen”).

The *St. Anthony Altarpiece* is dedicated to the patron saint of the Brotherhood, St. Anthony, whose *vita* and temptations form the basis of the painted and sculpted iconographic program. This retable, however, differs structurally from the *Corpus Christi Altarpiece*, as it features a single opening with large, iconic sculptures and painted wings, and not the popular late fifteenth-century local style of multi-figured carved narrative scenes in the wings. The *St. Anthony Altarpiece* is one of the last altars made locally before the Reformation in the city in 1531, and the style of the paintings and carvings attests to both artists’ familiarity with southern German altarpiece forms popular during the time. The altarpiece is atypical of the standard Lübeck structure: it lacks carved sculpture on the inner wings of the final view. Moreover, the *corpus* is not comprised of multi-figured sculpted scenes, but rather out of individual sculptures of three saints set into a narrow wooden casement. Yet, the original altarpiece did have a second set of wings in conformity to the Lübeck double-wing standard, but the wings are now lost.

The closed view depicts two panel paintings of Christ on the left outer wing and St. Anthony on the right outer wing [Fig. 2.34]. Christ, shrouded in luscious red and blue garments, is blessing with his right hand and holding the Good Book with his left. His foot rests on an orb, which is covered with landscape scenes, with an ornate cross at the top. Dominating the background, a verdant landscape and a generic built environment

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appear in the upper right, and a luxurious textile and tile pattern demarcates Christ from the everyday world. The visual structure is repeated on the opposite panel, with St. Anthony gazing at a book in his left hand. He is represented with his usual attributes: the swine at his feet and his tau-shaped cross staff in his right hand. St. Anthony is shown here in wilderness. A workshop assistant of the painter Hans von Köln likely executed the closed view, since the style of the landscape and figures differs from the painted wings of the shrine. The background of landscapes recalls the early work of fellow-Cologne painter Barthel Bruyn (1493-1555), who came to specialize altarpiece shutters with verdant landscapes.\textsuperscript{388}

The second and final opening includes a polychromed carved \textit{corpus} flanked by two painted wings. Carved Gothic filigree frames the central \textit{corpus}, and the same motif is repeated on the pedestals supporting Saints Rochus and Sebastian. The predella and fixed wing (\textit{Standflügel}) are now lost.\textsuperscript{389} The \textit{corpus} program focuses on the healing power against sickness and plague that these three popular saints invoked in the late Middle Ages. At the center of the \textit{corpus} is a large sculpture of St. Anthony, dressed in pilgrim garb with a bell and T-staff; he likely held a rosary bead in his other hand, which is now lost.\textsuperscript{390} A devil at his feet is biting his staff. The patron saint, inscribed as

\textsuperscript{388} On Bruyn, also known as Bartholomäus Bruyn, see Horst-Johannes Tümmers, \textit{Die Altarbilder des älteren Bartholomäus Bruyn. Mit einem kritischen Katalog} (Köln, 1964).

\textsuperscript{389} Bruns writing in 1926, mentions that the predella is no longer extant, which shows that this loss predates the Second World War. In “Die Entstehung des St. Antonius-Shreins,” p. 477. See also Tamara Thiesen, \textit{Benedikt Dreyer: Das Werk des spägotischen Lübecker Bildschnitzers} (Kiel: Ludwig, 2007), pp. 21-23.

SANCIVS ANTONIVS at the base of the pedestal, is flanked by the plague saints: Rochus, accompanied by an angel, and Sebastian with a bow and arrow. Dreyer’s sculpted corpus presents finely carved figures with dynamic poses and animated gestures. The carver’s style is something not yet seen in Lübeck at the time, in a style that recalls south German and Netherlandish models more than north German sculpture at the time.

Dreyer came from Lüneburg, the sister Hanse city that manufactured salt for Baltic trade.391 Based on Dreyer’s style, he likely trained in southern Germany or was at least familiar with South German sculpture at the time.392 Dreyer was first brought to Lübeck to work on the rood screen in St. Marienkirche, commissioned by the Lübeck Rat in 1515-1520.393 It seems plausible that members of St. Anthony first became acquainted with Dreyer during his work on the rood screen, in light of the interwoven demographics of members of St. Anthony Brotherhood and the Council. It is also easy to imagine that contracting Dreyer to carve the St. Anthony Altarpiece—the same artist hired by the city council to create the massive rood screen for the main patrician church—asserted prestige for the St. Anthony Brotherhood. Dreyer’s popularity and his finely executed carvings certainly made a statement altarpiece for the St. Anthony Brotherhood.

393 Thiesen, Dreyer, pp. 69-148.
Little is known about the painter Hans von Köln ("Johan van Collen") aside from his name in the contract for two altarpiece panels. The artist’s painted wings feature four scenes of the Temptation of St. Anthony. On the left inner wing, demons torment St. Anthony, and below, St. Anthony is tempted by the devil disguised as a woman. On the right outer wing St. Anthony prays before Christ, who appears in a radiant halo, and below, St. Anthony preaches. The style of Hans von Köln suggests his training in the Low Countries, because his landscapes, figures, and fantastic demons recall similar motifs as contemporary Netherlandish painters, such as Joachim Patinir. Christoph Emmendörffer proposes that Hans von Köln also executed the painted wings of an altarpiece in Arboga, Sweden after this commission. Dreyer later received commissions for altarpieces in Denmark and Westphalia, so the St. Anthony Altarpiece initiated new contacts for both artists in the greater Hanseatic region.

Thus, both the style and the structure of the corpus visually diverge from the Lübeck standard of carved and painted retables from the late fifteenth century. Simply put, St. Anthony Brotherhood ensured that their altar was stylish for the 1520s. Another way to consider the motivation for this retable is the interwoven memberships between the Corpus Christi Confraternity and the St. Anthony Brotherhood—these groups maintained a friendly competition, which perhaps also explains the staggered commissioning dates of 1495 and 1520, respectively. After all, the Corpus Christi Confraternity founded the Anthony Brotherhood in the same Dominican church. Both

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altarpieces must have been a feat for the elders of both groups to furnish their chapels with fashionable retables.

The merchant brotherhoods at the Burg offer further examples of the intertwined urban groups in Lübeck. It is remarkable that numerous merchants belonged to different types of groups simultaneously, such as the elite merchant societies as well as devotional brotherhoods. Taken together, these two categories of groups formed a platform of community with shared collective interests that served Lübeck merchants, but also reflected the republican values of the city.

**BALTIC OAK**

The fact that oak planks ("vor 49 wagenschate") were specifically requested in the contract for the *St. Anthony Altarpiece* is not surprising, because Lübeck guild rules required local artists to use oak.395 One could become a master in the Guild for Painters and Glaziers in Lübeck (*Lübecker Maleramt*) after one has proven his art as confirmed by the masters, applies for mastery in two languages, is a citizen in Lübeck, pays ten Marks

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Lübisch as capital, and participates in *Koste*.

In addition, no assistant should make his own works without the permission of his master. In order for an altarpiece to be made in Lübeck, numerous artisans in the guild would be employed: casemaker, carpenter, carver, metalworker, and gilder—not including the master painter and carver.

Specification for oak was also the case for guild regulations in Antwerp, where Baltic oak was explicitly requested. Baltic oak, referred to as wainscot boards *(wagenschott; wagenschoß, wagenschate)*, was a highly prized material in the Middle Ages, used for both sculpture and panel painting in northern Germany, as well as in the Netherlands and England. Notably, both the *Corpus Christi Altarpiece* and the *St. Anthony Altarpiece* of the merchant brotherhoods are made from oak. Since there was no primary forest in the region around Lübeck, oak was felled inland from old-growth forests in the eastern Baltic and transported across Hanse trade routes to North Sea destinations. In medieval Germany, the use of wood specimens varied regionally. In Southern Germany fifteenth-century artists and viewers, as Michael Baxandall has famously argued, fetishized the internal properties of limewood

Similarly, Baltic oak planks were valued at the time—not for their chiromancy, but for their durability during long-distance sea transport and resistance to moist sea climates.

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398 Oak is a particularly hard wood for carving. And while the material is suitable for coastal cities, it would take nearly ten years for the wainscot boards to dry before painting or carving.
Oak tracks the long-distance trade relationships maintained by the city’s merchants. Dendrochronologist Michael Rief has argued that the markings on the back of Baltic wainscot boards, known as merchant marks, were part of the complex context of Hanseatic trading [Fig. 2.35].

Merchants marked wainscot boards at specific stations in Danzig (Gdańsk), authenticating the origins of the wood as Baltic oak timber transported by Hanse traders. The quality of the boards was checked at the port, and if one board was of poor quality, the entire load was burned. In the workshop, wainscot boards are assembled together for the case, sculptural figures, and ornamentation. Often on the back of the altarpiece, the merchant marks remain visible, rather than turned inward to obscure. It seems likely the casemaker intended to show the merchant mark as a sign of workshop excellence, sourcing the highest quality of raw materials. Most notably, on the back of the *Corpus Christi Altarpiece*, a merchant mark is visible [Fig. 2.36]. This engraved housemark is on a single wainscot board, which is assembled with other boards to make up the altarpiece case. Since we do not know where the *Corpus Christi Altarpiece* was placed *in situ* in the Burg, we cannot be certain if this merchant mark was visible in its original context. Nonetheless, the engraved housemark of the unknown Hanse merchant who marked this wainscot board remained an index for the wider Hanse trade network involving countless members of the Corpus Christi Brotherhood.

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TRADE GUILDS AT ST. MARIENKIRCHE

The third category of elite merchant urban groups in Lübeck is trade guilds. This group was comprised of long distance merchants, but engaged with only one country, and it often included foreigners from their home region. The two most important trade guilds in Lübeck, the Bergenfahrer (Sailors to Bergen/ Bergen Traders’ Association) and the Schonenfahrer (Sailors to Skania), maintained trade between Lübeck and Scandinavia. More specifically, the Bergenfahrers connected Lübeck to the merchants of Bergen, Norway, a Hanse Kontor city, and the Schonenfahrers were made up of traders from Scania (Skania) in Southern Sweden and Denmark, who primarily traded herring. The herring fishing industry drove the Scania trade market, where huge schools of herring gathered annually; Lübeck-based merchants came with salt, presumably from nearby Lüneburg, to catch and preserve the herring to be sold across Hanse and European towns. Trade between Scania and Lübeck also involved textiles and cloth. Arnold, a thirteenth-century Lübecker chronicler, writes in a passage:

The Danes who imitate the habits of the Germans, with whom they are familiar because they have lived in their neighborhood for so long, are now adopting the dress and weapons of other nations. Previously, they dressed like seamen because they lived by the coast and were always preoccupied with ships, but now they clothe themselves not only in scarlet, particolored and grey furs, but also in purple and fine linens. The reason for this is that they have all become rich due to the fishing that takes place every year around Skania. While this fishing is taking place, merchants arrive from all the surrounding nations with gold, silver, and other treasures to buy herring from the Danes. They catch the herring that at no cost to themselves, by the abundant grace of God, while

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400 There is not a simple translation into English for these trade guild names, so I will retain the original German form rather than using ‘sailor’ to designate the group function.  
the merchants offer the best they have in order to secure a good bargain—and sometimes even lose their lives in shipwrecks.\textsuperscript{402}

According to Arnold, herring from Skania was so lucrative that it could be traded for other materials, raw or luxurious. After the foundation of the Schonenfahrer, the Bergen traders followed suit, joined later by the companies of sailors to Riga, Novgorod, Stockholm, England, and Spain. By the end of the fifteenth century in Lübeck, there were ten trading companies from long-distance cities in Lübeck—a figure that attests to the status of Lübeck as the premier trade city in north Germany; in contrast, there were only six in Rostock and three in Hamburg.\textsuperscript{403} Both the Bergen- and Skania-based trade guilds in Lübeck demonstrate cross-cultural exchange between Lübeck and their respective hometowns across the Baltic Sea, and in turn, we can see how the Scandinavian traders represented themselves in Lübeck through the commissioning of altarpieces for their group spaces in St. Mary Church [Fig. 2.37].

\textbf{THE SCHONENFAHRER ALTARPIECE}

The Schonenfahrers were first mentioned in documents in 1365, and they were the largest and most influential trade guild in the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{404} In 1396 the town council asked the Schonenfahrer to help pay for a new organ in St. Mary Church.\textsuperscript{405} Part


\textsuperscript{403} Dollinger, \textit{The German Hansa}, p. 162.

\textsuperscript{404} Heise and Vogeler, \textit{Die Altäre St. Annen Musuem}, p. 110. On the history of the Schonenfahrer, see Ernst Baasch, \textit{Die Lübecker Schonenfahrer} (Lübeck, 1922).

\textsuperscript{405} Mike Burkhardt, “Testing a traditional certainty: The social standing of the Bergenfahrers in late medieval Lübeck,” in \textit{Neue Studien zum Archiv und zur Sprache der 169
of this financial transaction included the right to an altar in patrician church. The only work of art today from the Schonenfahrer group, *Altar of St. John the Baptist of the Schonenfahrer* remains in fragments [Retabel vom Johannesaltar der Schonenfahrer, Figs. 2.38-2.40]. Bernt Notke (c. 1440-1509) was commissioned before 1475 to complete this new altar, and it likely replaced an older retable for the Schonenfahrers in St. Mary Church.  

The two extant painted panels from the closed view of the altar show the Trinity and the Baptism of Christ with the Old Testament figures King David and Isaiah below [Fig. 2.38]. King David, the Old Testament precursor to Christ, speaks “The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand” as inscribed on a flowing banderole from Psalm 109. On the opposite wing Isaiah utters “The voice of one crying in the desert: prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God” (Isaiah 40.3), a reference to St. John the Baptist above. The patron saint of the Schonenfahrers was John the Baptist, so this iconographic program caters to the commissioning group.

The interior wings, shrine, and predella are now lost. The reverse of the painted panels [Fig. 2.39] shows a festive side, filled with carved sculpture framed by ornamental tracery and gold punchwork—all standard elements of Lübeck painted and carved altarpieces in the second half of the fifteenth century. Woodwork from the interior

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406 This altarpiece likely replaced the old altar, since the group had the chapel space since 1397, it seems unlikely that an altar would remain unadorned for that time. Heise and Vogeler, *Die Altäre St. Annen Musem*, pp. 110-112.

407 *DIXIT D(OMI)N(U)S DOMINO MEO SEDE A DEXTRIS MEIS.*

408 *EGO VOX CLAMA(N)TIS IN DESERTO PARATE VIA(M) D(OMI)NI.*
baldachins further reveals that the shrine and its wings were elaborately carved and
gilded. The baldachin sculpture shows intricate Gothic filigree designs with gilded arches
and showcases the Schonenfahrer coats of arms [Fig. 2.40], a shield with three vertical
herrings. In situ, there would be no mistaking this altarpiece as belonging to anyone but
the Schonenfahrer group.

No archival documentation sheds light on the commission and production of the
Schonenfahrer Altarpiece. Hiring Notke and his workshop ensured that this work was
executed in the most popular style for Lübeck in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.
Notke maintained a large workshop in Lübeck that specialized in painting as well as
carved wooden sculpture. Indeed, Notke was arguably the most well known artist in
the entire Baltic region; he received commissions for sculpted works from several cities
beyond Lübeck, including Århus, Denmark (1479), Reval, Estonia (1483), and
Stockholm, Sweden (1489), among others. Notke was first referred to in the Lübecker

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409 Corpus I, Cat. Nr. 64, pp. 199-203 on archival summary.
410 Notke is listed in the Maleramt as a painter but never as a sculptor. Accordingly, there
is an enormous literature debating his painted or sculpted attributions. Most recently, see
Kerstin Petermann, Bernt Notke: Arbeitsweise und Werkstattorganisation im späten
Mittelalter (Berlin: Reimer, 2000), pp. 20-24. Anu Mänd and Uwe Albrecht, Art, Cult,
and Patronage: Die Visuelle Kultur im Ostseeraum zur Zeit Bernt Notkes (Kiel: Ludwig,
2013). On the Notke workshop in general: Goldschmidt, Lübecker Malerei und Plastik,
pp. 35; Walter Paatz, Bernt Notke und sein Kreis (Berlin 1939). Literature on Notke is
also extensive in Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish languages, indicating his popularity
across the Baltic.
411 There is great debate over Notke in completing the St. George and His Dragon
sculpture in Stockholm. See Peter Tängeberg, Wahrheit und Mythos: Bernt Notke und die
Stockholmer St.-Georgs-Gruppe. Studien zu einem Hauptwerk niederländischer
Bildschnitzerei (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2009); and in response, Jan Svanberg,
“Was the St. George Group in Stockholm made in Antwerp by an unknown Flemish
Master?: Review of Peter Tängeberg’s Book (2009)” in Art, Culture, Patronage, pp. 323-
329. Also Petermann, Notke, pp. 13-16, 137-153.
Maleramt in 1467, already described as a master with assistants. In Notke’s early years he worked in Lübeck on the Triumphal Cross in the Cathedral (1470-1478, Lübecker Dom) as well as the Schonenfahrer Altarpiece, dated c. 1475. In 1479 he purchased a house on Breite Straße in the city, and spent the next two decades on commissions in distant places. It seems likely that Notke worked on the Schonenfahrer Altarpiece during the same time as the Cathedral’s Triumphal Cross. This pattern of patronage resembles Dreyer’s employment from the St. Anthony’s Brotherhood, as he worked on the rood screen of St. Mary Church before the St. Anthony Altarpiece. The members of the urban groups clearly networked within the town to commission their local altarpieces, in addition to drawing upon their larger Hanse network to facilitate the production of works.

Notke painted the holy figures against a unified, naturalistic landscape scene. Typical of his style, the figures are monumental and display overly large hands and heads. For example, the face of Notke’s God the Father in the Schonenfahrer panels is nearly identical to the Emperor in his Reval Dance of Death [c. 1490, Tallinn, Estonia, Fig. 2.41]. The Old Testament figures typologically support the New Testament iconography above. Notke is clearly familiar with this iconographic structure of late medieval art, as well as the interplay between painting and sculpture in the altarpiece format. For example, the Old Testament figures are also cast in shadow, indicating a natural light source, whereas the holy scenes of the Trinity and St. John the Baptist need not abide by laws of natural light. The representation of water in these scenes also must

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have ensured salvation and safety for safe travel for the long-distance traders from Sweden in this trade guild.

Since the exterior wings are the primary surviving fragments, we cannot imagine the entire program. Nonetheless, the verso of the wings reveals that the interior shrine was elaborately carved and gilded. The shrine certainly stood as a testament to the Lübeck standard structure with a carved corpus and wings. But beyond the devotional function, the altarpiece also secured the group’s status as a leading urban group in the city. This altarpiece format of a carved shrine and wings is replicated in numerous other trade towns throughout the Baltic. The Schonenfahrer trade guild comprised Scandinavian merchants traveling between Lübeck and Sweden and thus likely served as an intermediary in the mobility of artists and objects throughout the region.

**THE “OLD” AND “NEW” BERGENFAHRER ALTARPIECES**

The other powerful Scandinavian trade guild in Lübeck, the Bergenfahrers, also established themselves locally to secure the lucrative Hanse fish trade. In the case of the Bergen market, stockfish (dried cod), not herring, was the valuable product. In the 1360s, Hanse traders organized themselves in an outpost (*Kontor*) in Bergen, and around the same time, Bergen traders oversaw their end of the exchange in Lübeck. Stockfish was a durable product in high demand, because it provided Church-approved sustenance for

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the 140 prescribed fasting days in the calendar. That sea product is proudly represented on the Bergenfahrer shield [Fig. 2.42], which features two symbols, the eagle and dried cod without a head. The design of the shield mimics the reciprocal nature of trade itself, since the Bergenfahrers shared their allegiance to sea trade with both Lübeck and Norway.

Bergen became the main trade hub of western Norway, accessible to northern Norway, England, northern Germany, and the Low Countries. Four Hanse Kontore (outposts) were situated at the edge of the trade region: Bergen, Bruges, London, and Novgorod. Hanse Kontor connected with Lübeck through commerce, but also in terms of culture and language. In particular, Lübeck traders facilitated this trade market in Bergen in an effort to secure Norwegian trade, and in turn, members of the Bergenfahrer lived in Lübeck. Accordingly, Bergenfahrer in Lübeck refers to the traders travelling to and maintaining contacts with Bergen.

Hanse historian Philippe Dollinger describes the trade guilds in Lübeck as “both professional and religious, charitable and recreational.”\textsuperscript{414} As foreigners living in Lübeck, these groups also quickly assimilated into the wealthy social order of the city and modeled themselves after other urban groups in the city by paying for a chapel in St. Mary Church, then furnishing the chapel with altarpieces. Just as with other urban groups in the city, membership to the trade guilds was interwoven: trade guild members were also joint members to the merchant brotherhoods. For example, Bergenfahrer members also took on the role of host (Schaffer) for the Koste celebrated by the merchant

\textsuperscript{414} Dollinger, \textit{The Hansa}, p. 161.
brotherhoods. Although, the Bergenfahrer and Schonenfahrer did not mount urban rituals in Lübeck themselves like Fastnachtspiele or the merchant brotherhoods’ Koste, they nonetheless participated through their overlapping membership with other urban groups.

Lübeck historian Friedrich Bruns in his seminal study on the Bergenfahrer in Lübeck determined that this trade guild did not have a high social standing in the city. Looking at the membership records of the merchant brotherhoods and elite societies in Lübeck, however, historian Mike Burkhardt identified sixty-four merchants with connections to the Bergen trade who were also members in the Corpus Christi Confraternity, fifty-four in St. Anthony Brotherhood, and twenty-eight in St. Leonhard Brotherhood during 1360-1510. During the same period, seventeen Bergenfahrers were members of the Circle Society and six of Greverade Company. Moreover, twenty-five merchants with connections to Bergen trade also served on the city council during this time. Bergenfahrers were clearly integrated members in the Lübeck society, members alongside the leading patricians.

415 Burkhardt identified 11 Schaffer and 6 Aldermen in Corpus Christi, 12 Schaffer for St. Anthony, and 5 for St. Leonhard all proved to be Bergenfahrers. In “Bergenfahrers in Lübeck,” p. 87.
416 Friedrich Bruns, Die Lübecker Bergenfahrer und Ihre Chronistik (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Hansischen Geschichte) Neue Folge, Bd. 2 (Berlin: 1900), pp. CXXXIX-CXLIV. Mike Burkhardt rejects this in ibid.
418 Ibid.
419 According to Burkhardt, this also means that 9.6 % of all members of the Town Council during this time were engaged with trade from Bergen. Ibid., p. 89.
Traders also had assembly houses: the Bergenfahrer house was located on Mengstraße, a home base that proclaims their significance in the city alongside the other leading merchants. A wooden sculpture of St. Olaf, the Viking king who Christianized Norway, was originally located in the house of the Bergenfahrer company [c. 1470, Figs. 2.43-2.44]. The patronage of this work is recorded in the company book, as donated by Schaffer Hinrich Hopper, Dirk Schildesort, Peter Wedeghe, and Gert Berdingusen. This work has been attributed to Johannes Stenrat (c. 1410-1484), whose sculptures extend across the Baltic to Vadstena, Bälinge and Öland in Sweden and date around 1470. Thus, Stenrat would be a logical choice for the Norwegian guild in Lübeck to commission a sculpture of their patron saint. Stenrat’s large sculpture depicts the holy Norwegian king in standard iconography: Olaf in armor stands atop a dragon with a human head and crown, symbolizing his pagan past. St. Olaf was undoubtedly the most important saint to medieval Norway, one who is repeated in all the Bergenfahrer altarpieces in Lübeck, as well as in Hanseatic settlements across the Baltic, including Reval (Tallinn).

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420 Ibid., p. 85
423 See Anu Mänd, “The Cult and Visual Representation of Scandinavian Saints in Medieval Livonia,” in Saints and Sainthood around the Baltic Sea: Literary and
This single-sculpture donation points toward a likely trend—that the urban groups in the city commissioned artists to furnish their guild houses. Unfortunately, no brotherhood, company, or guild house survives in its fifteenth-century form today. Nonetheless, the Schiffergesellschaft (Shippers Guild) in Lübeck, located at 2 Breite Straße, has maintained some original furnishings.\textsuperscript{424} Three surviving coats of arms from the Bergenfahrer, Novgorodfahrer and Englandfahrer [Fig. 2.42] further illustrate how guild houses would have been marked with company emblems.

The Bergenfahrer Chapel in St. Mary Church was located between the two towers in front of the west portal of the church [Fig. 2.37]. Indeed, we can gauge the group’s prestigious status in the town, because the entrance to St. Mary Church was relocated in 1396 from the west portal to the southwestern part of the church, precisely to accommodate the desired location of their chapel. The altar was dedicated to Saints Olaf (Olav) and Sunniva, two of the most revered saints of Norway in the late Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{425} The Bergenfahrer commissioned two altarpieces dedicated to the group’s patron saint, Olaf, to furnish their chapel: the first altarpiece was installed around 1410, with a second altarpiece added over one century later in 1522. In addition to altarpieces, the Bergenfahrer chapel was decorated with wall paintings, coats of arms, as well as stall

\textsuperscript{424} The Schiffergesellschaft, the Brotherhood of Captains, was founded in 1401. The current property was purchased in 1535 and is still in operation as a popular touristor restaurant/bar today.

decorations in the nave of the church. In 1473, the relics of St. Olaf were installed in a shrine in the front of the chapel; these were likely removed in 1531 under the Reformation decree in Lübeck, so nothing is preserved.\textsuperscript{426} The majority of the works of the Bergenfahrer chapel was destroyed during the Royal Air Force bombing of the city in March 1942, in which St. Mary was deliberately targeted.\textsuperscript{427}

The “Old” St. Olaf Altarpiece has one extant painted panel, now in the collection of St. Annen-Museum [\textit{Zwei Tafelgemälde von dem älteren Retabel der Bergenfahrer}, Fig. 2.45, c. 1410-20]. The front side features a fragment of a Crucifixion scene, and the reverse depicts the temptation of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of sailors and thus a logical iconographic motif for the Sailors from Bergen. The recto and verso of these panels are now separated. The Crucifixion fragment represents Christ on the Cross and a multi-figured scene with Longinus and the Virgin Mary. In the upper right corner of the Crucifixion scene, part of the Good Thief’s cross is visible. The reverse side with St. Nicholas shows the patron saint donning a Bishop’s cap under a canopy. St. Nicholas’s glance was likely pointed to a woman disguised as a devil, since her claw foot appears at the bottom left corner of the painting. St. Nicholas holds a book open to Psalm 118, “\textit{Beati immaculati in [via] qui ambula[n]t [in] lege Domini}” (“Blessed are those who are


\textsuperscript{427} On the Bergenfahrer chapel and wall decorations before the bombing, see Max Hasse, \textit{Die Marienkirche zu Lübeck}, pp. 124-128. Corpus Bd. II features destroyed works in the city, pp. 483-632.
The remaining iconographic program supposedly included painted panels with St. Mary, Sts. Sunniva, Catherine, and Dorothy, as well as St. Olaf alongside the extant St. Nicholas.\footnote{Reconstruction from Emmendörfter, *Hans Kemmer*, p. 47.}

While it is impossible to reconstruct the entire altarpiece program of the “Old” *St. Olaf Altarpiece* for the Bergenfaher chapel, it is significant that the style of fragments also recall the work of Conrad von Soest. Indeed, the double-sided panel has the hallmark signs of a Conrad style: saturated background, detailed punchwork, elongated bodies and extremities, and elaborate textiles and background scenes. Accordingly, the work has been attributed to the school of Conrad von Soest, but Brigitte Corley attributes this work to an “imitator” (“Nachahmer”) of Conrad, due to the close resemblance to Conrad’s Crucifixion scenes.\footnote{Brigitte Corley, “Conrad von Soest und die Hanse: Ein Betrag zur Frage Nachfolge,” in *Malerei und Skulptur des späten Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit in Norddeutschland: künstlerischer Austausch im Kulturraum zwischen Nordsee und Baltikum*, ed. by Hartmut Krohm, Uwe Albrecht, and Mattias Weniger pp. 115-124 (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2004), p. 118.} While there is no direct model for the image of Lübeck’s St. Nicholas, Corley identifies striking similarities in the facial features, architectural structures, and drapery between Conrad and this Lübeck imitator.\footnote{Ibid.}

The size of the painted fragment resembles an altarpiece wing, but the fragment was most likely the altarpiece’s center panel. Uwe Albrecht suggests that the extant panels were the center of a double-sided painted retable, because Crucifixion images were standard centerpieces at this time, as in both of Conrad von Soest’s altarpieces.

\textit{undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.”}\footnote{Inscription from Corpus I, Cat. Nr. 28, p. 133. Psalm translation Douay-Rheims.}

\footnote{Ibid.}
Moreover, double-opening painted altarpieces did not appear until the later fifteenth century, thus further pointing to an original double-sided painted retable format. In addition to the structural similarities between the Lübeck “Old” St. Olaf Altarpiece and Conrad’s Niederwildungen altarpiece, the style of the Bergenfahrer fragment further attests to local familiarity with Conrad’s work and his designs [Fig. 2.47].

The two earliest examples of commissioned altarpieces from Lübeck urban groups—the Circle Society and the Bergenfahrer—both feature paintings in the style of Conrad von Soest. This early moment in Lübeck altarpiece sponsorship correlates to the strong ties to Westphalia through Hanse trade relations and the current fashion for Westphalian painting in North Germany. Part of the motivation for obtaining Westphalian-style painted panels likely drew on membership demographics of both the Circle Society and the Bergenfahrers. As previously mentioned, the Circle Society was comprised of Westphalian-based patrician families, especially from the Hanse city of Dortmund. Similarly, around thirty percent of members of the Bergenfahrer derived from Westphalia. Given the large Westphalian representation in the Bergenfahrer group in particular, it is easy to understand why the trader guild sought a painted altarpiece in the most fashionable style from their home region. Indeed, this link forms part of the larger trend of all merchant groups in Lübeck while commissioning altarpieces: they purchased fashionable altarpieces. For the first quarter of the fifteenth century in North Germany,

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432 Corpus I, Cat. Nr. 28, p. 133.
433 Corley, Conrad von Soest, pp. 150-152.
434 Dollinger, The German Hansa, p. 163.
the most fashionable style of altarpiece was Westphalian-school paintings in the style of Conrad von Soest.

Closer to Lübeck, however, the Westphalian-style of painting was transformed into a distinctly north German style with the Hamburg-based painter, Master Francke (c. 1380- c. 1440). Master Francke likely trained in the Netherlands and also traveled to Westphalia in the second decade of the fifteenth century before completing his most prestigious commission in Hamburg. The English Traders Association (*Englandfahrer*) commissioned Master Francke to complete a retable for the Dominican monastery of St. John in Hamburg, the *St. Thomas Altarpiece* (Figs. 2.48-2.50, Hamburg Kunsthalle, 1424). The painted winged altar depicts the life of St. Thomas, patron saint of the English Trader’s Association, plus the life of St. Mary and the Passion in the final opening. Master Francke’s style further recalls Conrad and Westphalian painting at this time with multi-figured holy scenes against an intensely illuminated gold background with convincing realism.

The painted retables of the Bergen Traders in Lübeck, the England Traders in Hamburg, and the wings of the Circle Society in Lübeck share significant traits. First, the works are nearly contemporaneous, produced around 1420, 1424, and 1429, respectively.

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Second, the works demonstrate corporate sponsorship of painted retables with iconography that catered to the commissioning groups’ identities for their private use in Hanse city patrician churches. And finally, these works all point to a Westphalian influence in terms of style. Thus, in the first quarter of the fifteenth century in Lübeck corporate patronage of altarpieces depended on cultural transfer through Hanse trade connections—not to the Baltic during the first half of the fifteenth century, but to Westphalia and Hamburg. Certainly, the merchant altarpieces met the spiritual needs of merchants from near and far, but they also traced distant relationships and conformed to a fashionable style at the time—something that the trained eyes of merchants would have been likely to recognize. Aware of the trends in contemporary art due to their travels and contacts, these long-distance traders in Lübeck and Hamburg turned to artists and workshops engaged in contemporary styles to execute their altarpieces.

Alongside this pattern of corporate patronage, an individual Bergenfahrer member also privately commissioned an altarpiece that should be considered alongside the collective merchant altarpieces. Notably, the Lübeck Bergenfahrer Hans Rese donated the so-called Rese-Altar to St. Mary Church around 1499 [Figs. 2.51-2.53]. The Rese-Altar was not intended for the Bergenfahrer chapel, but was originally located in a private altar in the western part of the southern nave. Unlike the “Old” St. Olaf Altarpiece, this retable features a polychromed carved shrine in oak, which at the end of the fifteenth century, was the popular form of altarpiece production in the city. This work is attributed to the Immaculata Master (Imperialissima-Meister), an unknown Lübeck carver working

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in the circle of Bernt Notke. The iconography of the shrine relates to salvation of travelers to Norway, with the Virgin Mary and Christ Child and St. Christopher, the patron saint of travelers, in the center. The right wing features Sts. James, Sunniva (lost), Catherine, and Dorothy, and the left wing includes Sts. Olaf, Barbara, Anthony, and Gertrude. These saints provide shelter for travelers or serve as the patron saints of the Bergenfahrers, and thus they are also represented in both the “Old” and “New” St. Olaf Altarpieces of the Bergenfahrers.

Little is known about Hans Rese and the circumstances of production of this altarpiece. Nevertheless, the Rese-Altar attests to two concurrent trends alongside the mercantile corporate patronage in Lübeck at this time: first, Rese also belonged to the Corpus Christi Confraternity; and second, he facilitated the production of altarpieces for his home region, and such works frequently derived from Lübeck. Jan von Bonsdorff has identified three altarpieces entirely or partially from Lübeck in Trodenes in the far North of Norway, which corresponds directly to the Rese Altar. In other words, Rese stands as an example of an individual patron inspired by the corporate model. As a member of two prominent urban groups, the Corpus Christi Confraternity and the Bergenfahrers, Rese simultaneously supported altarpiece donations in Lübeck and abroad. These

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preliminary findings of a specific merchant in Lübeck who belonged to multiple urban mercantile associations demonstrate that individual merchants looked toward urban groups for their private donations and also used their merchant connections for the mobility of altarpieces throughout the Baltic region.

While the Rese-Altar is not an example of corporate patronage of an altarpiece in Lübeck, the Bergenfahrer group repeated many of these saints in painted or sculpted form in their second, or “New” St. Olaf Altarpiece. The Bergen Trade Association in Lübeck commissioned a second altar for their chapel in St. Mary Church in 1522, nearly one hundred years after their first double-sided, painted altarpiece was installed. The “New” St. Olaf Altarpiece of the Bergenfahrer [Figs. 2.54-2.59] for the Bergenfahrer chapel was ordered on 9 October 1522 and was installed in March 1524. It was located on the south wall of the chapel [Fig. 2.60] and painted by Hans Kemmer (also known as Johann Kemmer, c. 1495-1561). This work was partially destroyed before the twentieth century and completely destroyed during the Second World War. Prewar black and white photographs of three painted panels permit some evaluation of this work [Fig. 2.54-2.57]. Wilhelm Schoode (1883-1951) painted a copy of one of the original panels in 1930, which is now in the Nidaros Cathedral Museum in Trondheim, Norway [Fig. 2.58] and provides possible insight into the original coloring of the painted 1524 altarpiece panels.

The “New” St. Olaf Altarpiece was a double diptych, with one side of rotating wings [Fig. 2.59]. Its unusual shape was predetermined from its location in the chapel, opposite the “Old” St. Olaf Altarpiece and nestled between the south wall and chapel entrance. The closed view features three female saints, Sts. Barbara, Catherine, and
Dorothy, the main patron saints of the guild of Hanse merchants in Bergen. These three female saints were also repeated in sculpted form in the nearby shrine of the Rese-Altar and the “Old” St. Olaf Altarpiece. On the verso of the female saints panel is the Deposition of the Cross, and on the central panel stood St. John the Evangelist, St. Matthew, and St. Olaf. Nineteenth-century descriptions of the “New” St. Olaf Altarpiece reveal that the final opening included the Holy Family (“Heilige Sippe”) in the center shrine and individual sculptures of Saints Rochus, Anthony, and Sebastian on the wings. Across the center shrine and wings were carvings of the Twelve Apostles. Uwe Albrecht suggests that the 1493 Holy Family polychrome sculpture from another lost altarpiece in the St. Marienkirche likely resembles the lost Holy Family shrine from the Bergenfahrer [Fig. 2.59].

The carved shrine and wing were already destroyed or missing before the twentieth century, when the black and white photographs of the extant panels were taken.

The executor of the Bergenfahrer, Tiedeke Roloeves, commissioned Hans Kemmer to produce this altar in 1522. Kemmer trained with Lucas Cranach in Wittenberg before coming to Lübeck to complete the sponsored altarpiece. Kemmer received 190 Lübeck marks for the work; in comparison, for St. Anthony’s Altarpiece, made around the same time, Hans von Köln received 153 marks and Benedikt Dreyer 140 marks, so Kemmer’s asking price seems reasonable. The work was installed on 6 March

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441 Corpus II, p. 560.
442 Emmendörfter, Hans Kemmer, p. 74.
443 Kemmer arrived in Lübeck at the latest in 1522, the date of the contract. He married the widow of a painter, Anneke Wickhost and purchased a house on Königstraße in 1528. Vogeler, “Das Olavs-Retabel,” p. 231.
1524. The contract specified the iconographic program and stipulated gold backgrounds.444

The iconography of the "New" St. Olaf Altarpiece closely corresponded to the other works related to the Bergenfahrer group, as well as other Lübeck altarpieces produced at the same time. According to Max Hasse, the Deposition of the Cross must have served as a pendant to the Crucifixion panel from the "Old" St. Olaf Altarpiece [Fig. 2.61].445 The stipulated gold background further complemented the older altarpiece. In the chapel, the two altarpieces shared the same wall, and quick comparison of the works would have been easily possible for the intended viewing community of the Bergen Sailors. Furthermore, the shared Saints Catherine, Dorothy, Barbara, Sunniva, and Olaf demonstrate that these patron saints held the upmost significance to the Bergen group, which demanded their representation in the altar programs, including the Rese-Altar. Notably, the "New" St. Olaf Altarpiece was commissioned during the same year as the St. Anthony Altarpiece by the St. Anthony Brotherhood at the Burg (1522), which featured the healing saints Anthony, Sebastian, and Rochus. These three saints are again repeated in the new Bergenfahrer retable, and Anthony is also repeated in the Rese-Altar from c. 1499. Thus, the repeated iconographic program clearly demonstrates enduring veneration to their homeland. Furthermore, Christoph Emmendörfer argues that Kemmer worked with or learned from Hans von Köln, the painter commissioned for the contemporaneous St. Anthony Altarpiece.446 Given the interwoven relationships between

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445 Hasse, Die Marienkirche zu Lübeck, p. 128.
urban groups in Lübeck, it seems likely that the Bergenfahrers and the brothers of St. Anthony communicated with, or at the very minimum, were aware of their altar designs.

The “New” St. Olaf Altarpiece was the last collective merchant altarpiece before the Reformation in Lübeck in 1531. Ultimately, the retable represents a holy program catered to the Bergenfahrer group in an updated style. That is, in the 1520s, the group contracted a painter current in sixteenth-century figural and landscape styles, setting the figures within a naturalistic setting and in contemporary dress. Emmendörffer argues that Kemmer’s paintings have a “Reformation style” because of their close resemblance to Cranach’s contemporary aesthetic.\(^{447}\) Hildegard Vogeler rejects Emmendörffer’s argument based on the contract language, and the fact that the Reformation came to Lübeck nearly one decade after the altarpiece was finished. Ultimately, Vogeler interprets Kemmer’s paintings as a transition between medieval iconography and new German Renaissance style.\(^{448}\)

Indeed, Kemmer’s paintings exemplify the new style of German Renaissance painting that proliferated across the Holy Roman Empire in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Simply put, the Bergenfahrers in their one hundred years of altarpiece patronage sourced the style that was most popular at the time of commission. In the 1420s for the “Old” Olaf Altarpiece, fashion favored Conrad von Soest and Westphalian-style painting. The Rese-Altar drew upon local Lübeck sources to produce a painted and

\(^{447}\) More specifically, Emmendörffer argues that Kemmer’s panels for the altarpiece are Lutheran in content based on close examination of symbolism; see Hans Kemmer, esp. p. 82.

sculpted program closely resembling other corporate altarpieces, like the *Corpus Christi Altarpiece*. The Bergenfahrers successfully sustained trade in the city for over one century, sending merchants across the Baltic between Lübeck and Norway. The Bergenfahrer’s “Old” and “New” *St. Olaf Altarpieces* in their private chapel of the city’s main patrician church stood as symbols for their importance in the Hanse trade market as well as for their high social status in Lübeck. Given the fragmentary survival of the *Schonenfahrer Altarpiece*, as well as the *St. Olaf Retables*, it is difficult to construct a complete picture of how these retables also reflected similar patterns of patronage in the groups’ home countries of modern Norway and Sweden. Nevertheless, as will be demonstrated in the following chapter, the Baltic merchants certainly had a predilection for Lübeck carved wooden sculpture. For these two leading Scandinavian trade guilds, the contacts made in Lübeck mark the crucial link for the proliferation of Lübeck art and artists across the Baltic Sea.

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The merchant altarpieces in this chapter provide insight into the intersection of mercantile enterprise and civic patronage in the late medieval city. The six altarpieces examined here span one hundred years of altarpiece production in the city, and they also range in material, size, style, and structure. In addition, the altarpieces from St. Mary Church survive in fragments or through photographic evidence. Perhaps for these reason, these altarpieces are treated independently in previous scholarship, and any attempt to link altarpiece production in Lübeck has been limited to studies on attribution of single
artists or media, such as painting or sculpture. However, by viewing these merchant altarpieces together, two distinct unifying patterns emerge.

The first shared quality of these merchant altarpieces concerns the extraterritorial network as tracked by style. The patrons and viewers of these retables made their living from buying and selling goods across the Baltic and North Seas, as well as inland to Flanders and Westphalia. In Lübeck it was typical that merchants originated from distant places and maintained trade relations with their home region. Local Lübeck merchants were also well traveled and trained to discern quality products, so the merchants in all of the aforementioned urban groups certainly would have been familiar with the appearance and style of other altarpieces within their trade network. Until documentary evidence proves otherwise, we can presume that their trade connections also facilitated specific artists to work on their altars, such as the case of the unnamed artist working in the style of Conrad von Soest, or the non-local Lübeck artists like Hans von Köln or Hans Kemmer. From this established trade network, artists from Lübeck also received commissions across the Baltic in Scandinavia and Estonia. Lübeck served as a stepping-stone for many artists to showcase their talents, as well as a bridge for artists to make contacts across the Baltic. Thus, Lübeck merchants provided a model of collective patronage that was replicated in other Hanse cities throughout the Baltic region.

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449 For example, Thiesen’s monograph on Benedikt Dreyer glosses over the multimedia aspect of his St. Anthony Altarpiece to focus solely on the sculpture and the attributed works of the artist. Benedikt Dreyer, pp. 20-68.
A second distinct pattern from the collective patronage of merchant altarpieces is Lübeck’s local network. As demonstrated, the social order of Lübeck was collectively intertwined between many merchant groups, patrician societies, and trade guilds. Merchants belonged to many of these groups simultaneously, so it was in their best interest to maintain good relations and alliances with each other. In this way, the collective sponsorship of altarpieces also mirrors the values of the Hanse itself, which prized itself on coordination, cooperation, and trust. Just as the urban groups organized Carnival plays and Koste, they also enjoyed a friendly competition in altarpiece sponsorship, as demonstrated in the timing of altarpiece commissions, the varied contracted artists and workshops, and often the installation in the same churches. As described in detail above, the earliest works sponsored by the Circle Society and the Bergenfahrers were both installed in the 1420s, but in different devotional spaces in St. Catherine Church and St. Mary Church, respectively. Similarly, for the merchant brotherhoods at the Burg, the altarpieces of the Corpus Christi Confraternity and St. Anthony Brotherhood spanned twenty years. The urban groups in Lübeck drew upon their network of trade resources and capital to direct patronage—providing altarpieces by merchants for merchants in the Queen of the Hanse.
CHAPTER THREE

PATHWAYS AT SEA: BRUGES- LÜBECK- REVAL

INTRODUCTION

For the merchants working in Bruges in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the acquisition of Flemish panel paintings and painted altarpieces carried the highest associations of prestige, wealth, and status. The elite taste for Flemish painting at this time has been well documented in earlier studies, grounded on Florentine merchants living in Bruges.\(^\text{450}\) In similar fashion, German merchants from the Hanse cities of Lübeck and Reval turned to Bruges-based workshops to furnish their hometown devotional spaces. The Hans Memling workshop completed a double-winged painted altarpiece of the Passion, destined for Lübeck, Germany in 1491; now titled *Passion Altarpiece* or *Greverade Altarpiece* [Figs. 3.1-3.4], the retable was commissioned by the Greverade merchant family and installed in the family’s private chapel in the Lübeck Cathedral.

In the same decade, across the Baltic Sea in the sister Hanse city of Reval (Tallinn, Estonia),\(^\text{451}\) the Brotherhood of the Black Heads commissioned a double-winged painted retable, *The Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary* [after 1493, Figs. 3.50-3.56], for their


\(^{451}\) Throughout this chapter, I retain the German-historical name Reval rather than its modern equivalent, Tallinn, Estonia.
confraternity altar. This retable is attributed to the Master of the Legend of St. Lucy, an anonymous painter working in Bruges in the last quarter of the fifteenth century.

The arrival of the Memling and Lucy Legend painted retables to Lübeck and Reval, respectively, stand as examples in the cultural transfer of Netherlandish painting. Art historian and curator Till-Holger Borchert in his catalogue essay, titled “Mobility of Artists: Aspects of Cultural Transfer in Renaissance Europe” (2002) identified three groups responsible for the dissemination of early Netherlandish *ars nova:* merchants who purchased Flemish painting, royal courts, and artists who traveled from place to place. In this chapter, I concentrate on the first group—the merchants who purchased Netherlandish painting—in order to examine cultural transfer in late-medieval Europe—but specifically within the Baltic, not Mediterranean, context.

In addition to Netherlandish painting, long-distance Hanse merchants transferred other types of works of art across the Baltic region. While Bruges cornered the market for painting, Lübeck was known for its carved and painted altarpieces, often conforming to the local standard of double wings. In the particular case of Reval, local merchants and brotherhoods commissioned carved and painted altarpieces from Lübeck workshops to adorn the high altars of their patrician churches. The Baltic mercantile communities—

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including Reval but also cities in Norway and Sweden—turned to both Bruges and Lübeck for works of art.

Accordingly, in this chapter I consider two particular types of altarpieces, the Netherlandish painted retable and the Lübeck standard—a carved and painted altarpiece—in order to show the dual role that merchants played in dictating and facilitating cultural transfer within the Hanse network across the Baltic and North Seas. First, merchants acted as consumers to commission elaborate retables from extraterritorial workshops, often demanding specific iconographic programs and structural requests. Second, merchants operated as mediators, akin to their occupational skill to move raw materials and other finished goods throughout the Hanse region, overseeing logistical operations to manage the long-distance transport of objects. By examining the dynamic roles that merchants played as consumers and mediators in cultural transfer across the Baltic region, we can understand the artistic relationships between merchants in distant cities within the Hanse network.

I aim to avoid conceptualizing Lübeck and Bruges as the “centers” of the Hanse network. For example, art historian Jan von Bonsdorff summarizes the Baltic within a center and periphery relationship, stating that Lübeck should be classified as a “middle centre” to account for the city’s central geographical position in the Baltic region:

Bruges stands as the main centre, and in relation to it Lübeck can only be called a periphery. On the other hand, in relation to the Baltic Sea area, Lübeck must be called a centre.453

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The dual consideration of Lübeck and Bruges as centers is partially due to their large, condensed population size and quantity of art production, especially compared to smaller fifteenth-century settlements in the Baltic and North Seas.

Rather than classifying Hanse cities within the hierarchal center-periphery model, or a heartland and hinterland dichotomy, this chapter traces the mercantile pathways at sea in the last quarter of the fifteenth century between three nodes within the Hanse network: Bruges, Lübeck, and Reval.\textsuperscript{454} In particular, I consider the strongly connected network of long-distance merchants in the Baltic—living in Bruges, Lübeck, and Reval—where teams of trade representatives participated in the mobility of works of art between nodes. The focus on networks equally attends to where the object was made (the site of production), as well as how it moved, arrived, and was used in a local context.

The hierarchal center-periphery model also extends to the format of altarpieces: even though the same mercantile communities in Lübeck and Reval used both formats of altarpieces, Lübeck wooden and painted altarpieces seem secondary to early

Netherlandish *ars nova*. Placing these two types of altarpieces within a network of interactions, however, shows that Lübeck sculpture should not be classified as second-rate when compared Netherlandish art forms. Rather, considering both forms of retables as coeval objects places emphasis on the broader mercantile context, connections, and identity across the Baltic. Thus, using the network model also allows us to rethink the interpretive hierarchy that has been projected onto the study on altarpiece media.

**MEMLING’S GREVERADE ALTARPIECE IN LÜBECK**

Hans Memling’s *Greverade Altarpiece*, also known as the *Passion Altarpiece* or *Triptych* [1491, Figs. 3.1-3.5], was undoubtedly the most ambitious retable in late-medieval Lübeck, in part because the work looked different from other altarpieces in the city. Memling’s double-winged triptych is entirely comprised of painting on prepared oak, whereas the standard form of altarpieces in Lübeck combined painting and polychromed carved sculpture. In short, the *Greverade Altarpiece* stood out from the Lübeck standard altarpiece forms. In the inventory of the cathedral’s foundations, the work is listed as a “new, costly” (“*neue, kostbare*”) altarpiece, and later as a “fine altarpiece” (“*schöne Tafel*”). For such reasons, according to art historian Max Hasse,

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the Greverade family separated themselves from the community of Lübeck by showing a more distinguished taste.\footnote{456} 

The Greverades were a patrician merchant family in Lübeck, made wealthy by Hanse trade in Bruges and Sweden.\footnote{457} For multiple generations, the Greverades maintained the highest social status in Lübeck. Heinrich Greverade (d. 1468/9) founded the Greverade Company (\textit{Greverade-Kompanie}), a long-distance trading corporation, in the early 1450s.\footnote{458} His brother Adolph (d. 1481) served on the Lübeck council from 1455-1481. Heinrich’s two sons, also named Adolph (d. 1501) and Heinrich (d. 1509), took over the family trade business, but the elder Adolph (d. 1501) soon entered the church; he matriculated at the University of Louvain in 1495, and Pope Alexander IV nominated him to a position as canon in Lübeck in 1497.\footnote{459} Since both brothers traveled


\footnote{457} Their origins can perhaps be traced to Greverath, northeast of Trier. Peter Bietenholz, “Adolf Greverade of Lübeck” in \textit{Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Formation} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 128-129.


\footnote{459} Two younger Greverades joined him at Louvain—Ludolf and the younger Adolph, the sons of Heinrich (d. 1509). Heinrich died in Rome in 1509 and Adolph in Louvain. 196
intermittently to Bruges, either could have made the contract with Memling before 1491.\textsuperscript{460}

In their hometown of Lübeck, the Greverade family cultivated their elite image through the commissioning of altarpieces, and more specifically, through the sponsorship of painted retables. In addition to the esteemed Passion Triptych, ordered from the Memling workshop in 1491, the Greverades also turned to the local workshops of Hermen Rode and Bernt Notke to furnish their family chapel in the Church of St. Mary (St. Marienkirche) with painted altarpieces: in 1494 Rode was commissioned for a painted diptych on the theme of the Crucifixion [Figs. 3.13-3.16], and soon after, the Notke workshop returned a painted panel on oak with the subject of the Mass of St. Gregory [ca. 1500, Figs. 3.18-3.19]. Put differently, the Greverade family commissioned three painted retables within a period of ten years for their devotional spaces in Lübeck. As follows, the Greverade patronage of painted retables and panels deviated from the local standard not only in format but also in their roles as patrons: these works lack carved shrines and were not collectively commissioned.

\textsuperscript{460} Which brother made the contract with Memling’s workshop remains hotly debated. W. H. James Weale first suggested that Heinrich Greverade (“Henry Greverade”), the ‘merchant’ brother, donated the altarpiece, in \textit{Hans Memlinc: A Notice of His Life and Works}, (London, reprinted, 1901), pp. 54-58. Originally printed in 1865 without the patron attribution, and then again in 1871 under the title \textit{Hans Memlinc: Zijn leven en zijine schilderwerken} (Bruges, 1871). This named patronage has been supported by Lübeck art historians, including Carl Georg Heise, in \textit{Der Lübecker Passionaltar von Hans Memling} (Hamburg 1950), p. 7. Max Hasse suggests that either brother could have made the commission, proposing a logical commission date before 1491, in “Hans Memlings Lübecker Altarschrein,” p. 1. Theodor Gaedertz published the chapel foundation records, listing the Memling altarpiece, in \textit{Hans Memling und dessen Altarschrein im Dom zu Lübeck}, esp. p. 25.
To return to the Memling example, the *Passion Altarpiece* was the last monumental work from the Memling workshop. The Bruges-based master completed the double-winged painted retable for the Greverade family in 1491, and the work arrived in Lübeck no later than 1504. The altarpiece remained in the Lübeck Cathedral until 1939, where it was moved to the St. Annen-Museum for safekeeping during the Second World War.\(^{461}\) Measuring nearly nine feet wide when opened, the altarpiece remains in its original frame, adorned with flattened Gothic tracery on top.\(^{462}\) The closed view represents the Annunciation in grisaille with the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary on two wings [Fig. 3.2]. In the first opening, also known as the second view or everyday view, the foldable wings reveal four panels with four saints identifiable with their attributes: Saint Blaise, holding the candle that saved a child from choking on a fish bone; Saint John the Baptist, gesturing toward the lamb; St. Jerome, removing a thorn from the lion’s paw; and St. Giles, touching the deer that he saved from an arrow wound [Fig. 3.3]. The second opening or third view unveils a triptych of the Passion, including the stages of the Passion on the left panel, the Crucifixion in the center, and both the Resurrection and Ascension on the right wing [Fig. 3.4].

\(^{461}\) Max Hasse noted in the 1960s that the quality remained quite good, and that the blues had turned to black in the paintings over time, creating a much darker effect than originally painted. In Hasse, *Hans Memlings Lübecker Altarschrein*, p. 7

The structure of the painted altarpiece clearly indicates that the work was intended for a local Lübeck audience. Memling’s *Passion Altarpiece* diverged from the contemporary Netherlandish triptych model in that it has a double opening. Double-winged altarpieces (*Doppelflügel*, *Wandelaltar*), meaning two sets of doors hinged to the *corpus*, are a structural type of altarpiece that was widespread throughout North Germany and the wider Baltic region. Notably, the *Greverade Altarpiece* was the only work in Memling’s oeuvre that deviated from the Netherlandish triptych standard of altarpieces, which had only one set of doors, and thus, one opening. The Greverade patrons likely stipulated the double wings for the work, since this retable format remained uncommon in the Low Countries. Earlier scholarship on Memling, for instance, clearly struggled with the rarity of the double-winged format: W. H. James Weale suggests that the first and second views of the Annunciation and the intercessor saints were added after the death of Heinrich in 1509, arguing that Memling’s assistants completed these views because of their unequal quality to the painted *corpus*. Conversely, art historians Barbara Lane and Dirk De Vos emphasize that the double-winged format indicates Memling’s awareness of German altarpiece forms. Along the same lines, the double-winged format also suggests Memling’s ability to cater to the demands of patrons—in

463 Outside the Baltic region, Matthias Grünewald’s *Isenheim Altarpiece* features a double set of doors (1512-16, Musée d’Unterlinden, Colmar).


this particular case, German merchants from Lübeck requesting a specific, local altarpiece form.

Memling’s double-winged triptych was unique to Bruges in structure and to Lübeck in painted material, where altarpieces made of carved oak were the workshop standard. Even though this painted retable is devoid of carved oak figures, Memling nonetheless recalls the visual tradition of sculpture in the exterior view. When closed, Gabriel and Mary stand on pedestals, representing the Annunciation in painted form to mimic sculpture. Lynn Jacobs points out that in the *Greverade Altarpiece*, Memling plays with the relationship between sculpture and paint by representing the lily on the floor in color—a polychrome object in a monochrome scene—that underscores Memling’s artistic self-consciousness in painting sculpted objects. To be sure, Memling’s earlier altarpieces also engaged with the dual visual traditions of sculpture and painting, as seen in his *Last Judgment Triptych* [1473, Fig. 3.12], with the donor figures in color on the closed view. However, the play on representation—that is, paint mimicking sculpture—takes on new meaning in Lübeck, where the Lübeck standard reserved sculpture for the final view only.

In addition to the structural specification of the work, Memling also iconographically catered the content of this altarpiece to its local Lübeck context. The Greverade family founded a vicarage in 1494 in St. Marienkirche. When Adolph

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Greverade died in Louvain in 1501, his will listed a donation for a vicarage to establish a new family chapel in the Lübeck Cathedral with an altar dedicated to the Holy Cross, the Blessed Virgin, and Sts. John the Baptist, Jerome, Blaise, and Giles. However, this vicarage was not endowed until 1504. The iconography of the altarpiece sheds light on the intended location of the altarpiece in the Cathedral. All four saints in the first opening—Sts. Blaise, John the Baptist, Jerome, and Giles—were patron saints of the chapel and altar in the cathedral. In addition, Sts. John the Baptist and Blaise are also the patron saints of the cathedral. St. Giles, one of the original Fourteen Holy Helpers, is linked to the cathedral in Lübeck through the nearby church under his patronage (St. Aegidiskirche/St. Giles Church). And finally, St. Jerome was the protector of the Greverade family.

The commission of Memling’s altarpiece must have requested the portrayal of all four of these dedicatory saints to suit its final destination. Indeed, contracts with artists in the fifteenth century typically dictated program, size, materials, and a payment plan.

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470 Hasse proposes that the altarpiece was ordered the same year as the vicary, but due to funding issues, it was not endowed until 1504, at which time the Memling was installed. In “Der Lübecker Passionaltar Hans Memlings als Denkmal Mittelalterlicher Frömmigkeit,” in *Vom Lübecker Dom*, ed. Paul Brockhaus (Lübeck, 1958), pp. 33-37.
471 Gaedertz published deed of endowment. Foundation was not only under the protection of the Holy Cross but also four saints. Gaedertz, *Hans Memling*, p. 25. See also De Vos, *Memling*, p. 326.
473 In Italy Ellen Schiferl has identified that patrons in corporate contacts stipulated iconography and often described other works of art, in “Italian Confraternity Art Contracts: Group Consciousness and Corporate Patronage, 1400-1525” in *Crossing the Boundaries: Christian Piety and the Arts in Italian Medieval and Renaissance Confraternities*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991), pp. 121-140.
For instance, Dieric Bouts’s contract for the *Holy Sacrament Altarpiece* (1464-68, St. Peter’s Church, Leuven), commissioned by the Brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament in Leuven, specifies the interior and exterior programs, requests theologians as consultants to the iconographic program, and outlines a schedule for payments. Given Memling’s program of the second view with specific intercessory saints, the *Greverade Altarpiece* was destined for the cathedral, not St. Mary Church, so the delay between the commission and delivery of the altarpiece was likely due to the founding and funding of the cathedral chapter after Adolph’s death. The unified architectural background of the four panels of the first opening further evokes the altarpiece’s implied destination in a private chapel with barrel vaulting, illuminated Gothic tracery windows, and Romanesque columns. Lübeck art historian Theodor Gaedertz also suggests that Memling’s backlit light sources in the panels were meant to evoke the actual chapel destination of the work—although Memling and his workshop would have certainly finished the work in Bruges without ever seeing the work’s ultimate destination.

The third view, or feast view (*Festtagsseite*), unveils a compressed Passion narrative, or *Simultanbild*, beginning at the far left corner of the left wing, which includes: the Agony in the Garden, the Arrest and Betrayal of Christ, Cutting off Malchus’s Ear, the Healing of Christ, the Denial, the Washing of the Hands, the

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Flagellation, the Crowning of Thorns, Ecce Homo, and Carrying of the Cross. On the opposite right wing, the condensed narrative continues with the Entombment, Resurrection, and Ascension; appearing in the background are the narratives of Noli me Tangere, the Incredulity of Thomas, and the Men of Emmaus. In this final triptych view, Memling also inserted a donor portrait of one of the Greverade brothers at the bottom left corner of the left wing—a feature typical of late medieval devotional wings.

The condensed episodes of the Passion in the left wing are set in a congested urban space, visually recalling Memling’s earlier Scenes of the Passion [c. 1470, Turin, Fig. 3.5] and Scenes from the Advent and Triumph of Christ [1480, Munich, Fig. 3.6]. Memling scholars have discussed the function of the miniature scale and condensed narrative in the Scenes of the Passion extensively. Barbara Lane, for example, argues that this motif served as a personal spiritual pilgrimage for that work’s patrons, Tommaso and Maria Portinari. Dirk de Vos suggests that this work remained in Bruges until 1500-1510, possibly in Portinari’s chapel for the Church of St. James, whereas Paula Nuttall

477 De Vos suggests that the donor portrait is likely Adolph, the Lübeck canon, rather than his brother Heinrich, the merchant, arguing that if the portrait dates to 1491, the donor portrait conventionally represents one of the Greverade brothers, since Adolph had not yet become priest and would be shown without ecclesiastical garb. In Memling, p. 326
478 Kirkland-Ives, Hans Memling’s Passion Narratives, pp. 23-24; Lane, Memling, pp. 147-164.
479 Lane, Memling, p. 315.
proposes that this work was commissioned for the Church of the Franciscan Observants, where Portinari was also a patron. Mark Trowbridge proposes that Memling’s condensed narratives recall the visuality of processional dramas in the streets of Bruges at the time, such as the Holy Blood Procession, suggesting that Memling intended to reflect Portinari’s new experience in Flanders in pictorial form to bring back home. What these varied interpretations share is the notion that the Memling workshop was capable of tailoring the content of the work of art to the patron. In other words, there was a clear relationship between the commissioning party and the Memling workshop in determining the final product of the work of art. So, the format of a personal spiritual pilgrimage in Lübeck’s Passion Altarpiece perhaps attends to the private viewing context of the Greverade family’s chapel, or likewise, to the patrons’ desire to have their Flemish experience translated into altarpiece form.

The specificity of the altar program is most apparent in the center panel of the Passion Triptych, which features the Crucifixion. Unlike the right and left wings, which represent a condensed narrative on a miniature scale, the Crucifixion is highlighted as a single episode, a climactic event. Christ on the Cross, directly in the center of the composition, is flanked by the Good and Bad Thieves. This was Memling’s only altarpiece to represent the Crucifixion in such detail as well as the only commission for

480 De Vos, Hans Memling, p. 109; Nuttall, From Flanders to Florence, p. 64.
the artist from German merchants in Bruges. As a result, it is widely assumed that Memling’s composition not only depended on its German destination but also derived from German sources. For example, Hans Gerhard Evers argues that Memling’s Calvary central panel in the Greverade Triptych recalls other Calvary scenes from Westphalia, such as the Master of Schöppingen [active 1440-1470, Fig. 3.7] and the Master of Liesborn in Soest [c. 1445, Fig. 3.8]. These anonymous artists made crowded Passion scenes with striking compositional similarities in the arrangement of figure groups around the center Crucifix, such as the swooning Virgin held by Mary Cleophas and St. John. According to Stephan Kemperdick, these Westphalian masters united the Crucifixion scene into a continuous setting, which served as an image source for early Netherlandish painters such as Memling.

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482 Given the popularity of the Calvary typology in Westphalia, and the survival of two Calvary panels once attributed to Memling in Budapest and Haarlem, Till-Holger Borchert argues that Memling’s workshop likely produced a now-lost composition of the Calvary, which was used as an image source for the Lübeck, Budapest, and Haarlem versions. In “Some Observations on the Lübeck Altarpiece by Hans Memling,” p. 96. De Vos also supports this idea and also suggests that the Passion Triptych was in Bruges until 1500, where it was copied, which supports the assumption that the work arrived in Lübeck sometime around 1504. In Hans Memling, p. 328. For earlier German models, see also Elisabeth Roth, Der volkreiche Kalvarienberg in Literatur und Bildkunst des Spätmittelalters. Philologische Studien und Quellen Heft 2 (Berlin: Schmidt, 1967).


484 Evers, Dürer bei Memling, pp. 37-42. These comparisons are supported generally by Memling scholars, including De Vos, Hans Memling, p. 320; and Borchert “Some Observations on the Lübeck Altarpiece by Hans Memling,” p. 99-100.

Of course, Memling’s awareness of the Calvary typology in Westphalia could also pertain to the artist’s own German origins; he was born in Germany near Frankfurt, and has been referred to as “the German Hans” (“der duitsche Hans”).\(^{486}\) The painter migrated early to Bruges, where he is registered in Poortsbocken in 1465 as born in Seligenstadt and paid twenty-four shillings.\(^{487}\) Memling’s name was never listed in the painter’s guild account book, but was mentioned in the memorial list of the Bruges Painter’s Guild.\(^{488}\) The location of his apprenticeship remains uncertain with possible connections to the Brussels, Cologne, or Louvain.\(^{489}\) Part of the motivation in determining Memling’s apprenticeship pertains to his familiarity with both the style and compositions of major early Netherlandish artists at the time, especially Rogier van der Weyden, but also including Dirk Bouts, Jan van Eyck, and Petrus Christus.\(^{490}\) In addition to these workshops in the Low Countries, the “German” Memling was also aware of German painting at the time, demonstrating affinity to Stephan Lochner in Cologne. Indeed, his *Greverade Altarpiece* stands as a good example of Memling’s familiarity with

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\(^{487}\) Seligenstadt is outside Frankfurt am Main, in the Rhineland. Lane, *Memling*, pp. 10-11.

\(^{488}\) Ibid.

\(^{489}\) Lane proposes all three cities as possible locations for Memling’s *Wanderjahre*. Ibid., pp. 17-77.

\(^{490}\) On stylistic affinities with these artists, see ibid., pp. 17-91.
German painting traditions in both its double-winged format as well as the crowded Calvary composition that was popular then in Westphalia.

Yet, the Greverade Altarpiece also points to Memling’s ability to accommodate patrons, especially the Greverade brothers’ demand that the format of the work be in line with local standards, as well as their call for iconographic specificity of the retable program. So above all, Memling was skilled in meeting the demands of his patrons, the majority of whom were local to Bruges. The Greverades, like other foreign merchants living in Bruges, acted as both consumers and agents in the transfer of works of art, and more broadly, of culture, from Bruges to their hometowns.

**BRUGES AS HANSE CITY**

Bruges was one of the largest cities in northern Europe in the late fifteenth century and maintained a lively commercial and artistic environment. It is worth noting that Bruges differed politically from Lübeck, a free imperial city where the city councilors controlled all matters; in contrast, Bruges was a ducal city, meaning the city, while subject to ducal authority, also benefited from the local presence of the Burgundian court. So, in Bruges, both royal and civic prosperity created a burgeoning art market. This Flemish city has been the continued subject of historical and art historical studies on the conditions of painting in the urban and courtly milieux for the early Netherlandish *ars nova*. Maximiliaan Martens, Peter Stabel, and Wim Blockmans have examined the

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491 Lane argues that Memling’s ability to rework themes and motifs determined his success amongst patrons. Lane, *Memling*, p. 9. See also Jacobs, “Memling’s Grisailles,” pp. 271-272.
market and social demands for art in Bruges. In addition, extensive studies on the social history of artistic practices by art historians Shirley Blum, Barbara Lane, and Jean Wilson, among others, have thoughtfully laid out the patronage of Memling and his contemporaries. Historians James Murray and Werner Paravicin have also taken up the relationship of Bruges to the Hanse network, in particular, documenting the community of German merchants living in Bruges in the late Middle Ages. These

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studies have all demonstrated that the economic growth in Bruges created a specialist economy for painting: a major trade market that created a demand for artistic products catered to elites with high purchasing power.

Bruges served as one of the four Hanse outpost cities (alongside London, Bergen, and Novgorod), linking the Baltic cities to one of the most important commercial cities in northern Europe in the late-medieval era. In return, the Hanse network was the largest trade partner for Bruges and Flanders.®® Hanse trade products like beer, herring, salted cod (stockfish), grain, wood, and fur, were exchanged for Flemish cloth and other fine, finished goods [Fig. 3.9]. In this outpost Flemish city, German Hanse merchants were known as the Oosterlingen or Easterlings. The Easterlings maintained special privileges in Bruges, partly because their raw materials from the eastern Baltic were crucial for local and regional consumption. If the city of Bruges demanded high taxes and restricted their trading rights, the Easterlings ceased their trading in order to protect their wider Baltic trade interests; and when the privileges tilted in favor against the Easterlings, the Hanse issued a trade blockade.®® Blockades happened in the fifteenth century from 1436-1438, 1451-1457. After the death of Mary of Burgundy in 1482, the city of Bruges did not recognize Maximilian of Habsburg as a new ruler; and as a result, Maximilian

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blockaded the city’s link to the sea and ordered foreign merchants to leave Bruges in 1484 and again in 1488. Maximilian eventually transferred Bruges’s trading privileges to Antwerp, thus effectively terminating the Hanse’s most western outpost in Europe and interrupting the strong commercial ties between Hanse merchants and the city of Bruges. After the last blockade was lifted in 1491, both the Greverades and the Brotherhood of the Black Heads returned to Bruges to start contact negotiations with the workshops of Memling and the Lucy Legend Master, respectively.497

Despite the periods of commercial interruption, German merchants were integrated into civic life, and they fraternized with the leading merchant groups in the city, such as Florentine, Genoese, and Iberian, as well as the Flemish traders. The merchant groups resided in their own trading house near the other merchant quarters in the city: the Italians lived around Beurze Square and the Iberians at Biscay Square, all near each other. The Hanse merchants used the refectory of the Carmelites of Bruges and lived in the Oosterlingenhuis, the meeting and customhouse, built from 1478-1481 by the local architect Jan van der Poele.498 The Easterlings were also present in the urban fabric

497 Very few works of art were commissioned by foreign merchants in Bruges from 1484-1491. Anu Mänd, “The Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary of the Confraternity of the Black Heads in Tallinn: Dating, Donors, and the Double Intercession,” Acta Historiae Artium Balticae 2 (2007), p. 39. The contract between Memling and the Greverades is presumed to be before 1491; the Lucy Legend Master’s altarpiece arrived sometime after 1493 in Bruges, so it likely was finished after the 1491 blockade ended. The dating of the Lucy Legend Master’s altarpiece is discussed further in this chapter.

498 During the period of construction, the Easterlings used the Carmelite refectory for business. The house was suddenly less frequented after 1500, when Antwerp replaced Bruges as the main trading city in the region. It was sold in 1643. The Hanse archives were transferred to Cologne in 1593 and were destroyed in the collapse of the Cologne archives in 2009. See Paravicini, “Bruges and Germany,” pp. 105-110; Luc Devliegher, “Het Oosterlingenhuis te Brugge” in Hansekaufleute in Brügge. Teil 4: Beiträge der
of the city; the city granted the Easterlings use of the public square *Oosterlingenplein*, which still bears that name. Additionally, as early as 1300, the city created ‘Hamburg’ and ‘Lübeck’ Streets.\(^{499}\) In the 1562 map of Bruges by Marcus Gheeraerts, we can see the close proximity between the guild house, the Carmelite monastery, and the *Oosterlingenplein* [Fig. 3.10]. This organization differed from Novgorod’s *Petershof*, London’s *Stalhof*, or Bergen’s *Tyskbrugge*, in that German merchants neither lived nor conducted business separately in the town.\(^{500}\) Here Bruges can be distinguished from other Hanse Kontor cities, because German merchants adapted to, and adopted Flemish customs, rather than the typical inverse in Kontor cities, where local groups conformed to German customs.

The Easterlings were thus part of a larger class of foreigners who lived in Bruges for weekly, monthly, or yearly intervals. In Memling’s time, around one hundred Easterlings were recorded.\(^{501}\) Naturally, the foreign traders became highly invested in the local community: they made annual donations to convents, gave alms, joined confraternities and guilds, and participated in civic events and processions.\(^{502}\) A


\(^{502}\) The Easterlings donated to the Carmelites and Augustinians as well as parish churches. See Murray, “Bruges as Hansestadt,” p. 187; Paravicini “Bruges and
prestigious Bruges confraternity dedicated to the Virgin of the Dry Tree (*Ten Droghen Boome*), mentions six Easterlings, including Gherart Castorp, whose family maintained active membership to the patrician and mercantile urban groups in Lübeck.\(^{503}\) One hundred Easterlings also participated in the Ducal procession of 1440, all wearing matching red and black dress; and in 1457, when the Hanse returned to Bruges, a ceremonial entrance with more than 200 Easterlings ensued.\(^{504}\)

In addition to the presence of Easterlings in Bruges to conduct regular trade business, we also know that several Lübeck patricians maintained personal connections with Flemish-based family and trade partners. Due to such relations, Lübeck patricians escaped to Bruges and Flanders during the Lübeck Council Crisis from 1408 to 1416. Upon their return, the Lübeck patricians in the Circle Society began staging Carnival plays in the Flemish tradition, using wagons and pageant carts in 1430.\(^ {505}\) Therefore, it seems likely that during this exile period Lübeck patricians witnessed or even participated in the urban rituals and processions staged in Bruges, returning to their

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\(^{503}\)Other Easterlings include: Heyndric Muldre, Herman Coels, Jan van Kempen, Simeon van Weden, Christaen Utteroc. Tommaso Portinari and Gerard David also belonged to this urban group, listed in Paravicini, “Bruges and Germany,” p. 125. For the Castorp family in Lübeck, see Chapter Two on the Merchants Company and Circle Society in Lübeck.  

\(^{504}\)Paravicini, “Bruges and Germany,” p. 102.
hometowns with this knowledge of local customs, highly inspired to emulate Flemish civic rituals.

Most notably, foreign merchants in Bruges, including the Easterlings, served as great patrons of the arts. Merchants lived lavishly in the city, motivated by devotion and material success, and they expressed their status through artistic patronage for their hometowns. According to Wim Blockmans, the artistic market in Bruges depended on institutions and merchants more than on the court and its personnel. In other words, foreign merchants formed the core of the city’s financial elite, and thus they became the major source of artistic patronage. While wooden sculptures and altarpieces were available for purchase on the open market in Bruges, local painters worked frequently on commission. The leading painters of the fifteenth century in Bruges, including Jan van Eyck, Petrus Christus, Hans Memling, and Gerard David, all came from outside the city, and accepted commissions from confraternities, civic groups, and individual patrons.

The Hans Memling workshop in particular worked chiefly on commissions. Memling’s reputation for delivering an on-time and quality product was certainly well known locally, and surely Memling was an attractive investment for both local and foreign patrons, including Italian, German, English, and Spanish merchants conducting
Foreign merchants living in Bruges, including Tommaso Portinari and Angelo Tani, heads of the Florentine Medici bank from 1439-1490, turned to Memling to paint their portraits and to furnish privately endowed chapels in their hometown. Furthermore, both Portinari and Willem Moreel each commissioned two works from Memling, indicating that the artist produced a quality product and the workshop was reliable with commissions. Willem Moreel (d. 1501), the Bruges politician and banker, commissioned portraits of himself and his wife [c. 1472-1475, Brussels] as well as the Triptych of St. Christopher, also known as the Moreel Triptych [1484, Groeningemuseum, Bruges] for their private altar in St. James’s Church in Bruges. In addition to the portraits of Moreel and his wife on the wings of the Moreel Triptych, the couple’s children are also shown, including five sons and eleven daughters. This donor portrait tradition, popular in the Low Countries, can also be seen in the Lucy Legend Master’s Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary for the Brotherhood of the Black Heads, which shows thirty generic donor portraits of the merchant group’s brothers [Figs. 3.51, 3.55]. Interestingly, the representation of standing saints in the Moreel Triptych, however, is not a custom from the Low Countries; De Vos suggests that Memling borrowed this visual tradition from German painting.


On patrons in Bruges, see Paula Nuttall’s “Florentine Patrons in Bruges” in From Flanders to Florence, pp. 53-75.

See Cat. Nos. 22 and 63 in De Vos, Memling.

De Vos, Memling, p. 241.
Similar to Moreel’s patronage patterns, Portinari purchased the *Scenes of the Passion* [c. 1470, Turin, Fig. 3.5], and portraits of himself and his wife, Maria Baroncelli, which were likely wings to a larger devotional triptych, whose center panel is now lost [1470, Metropolitan Museum]. Portinari also turned to the workshop of Hugo van der Goes to complete the *Portinari Altarpiece* [c. 1473-78, Uffizi, Florence, Fig. 3.11]. Art historian Paula Nuttall argues that the *Portinari Altarpiece*, made in Bruges but destined for Florence, was specifically meant to cater to a Florentine audience by overplaying distinctive ‘Netherlandish’ features. More specifically, the elaborate textiles, jewels, overall naturalism, and naturalistic details interested Florentines. Indeed, local Lübeck painters would also implement these visual motifs found in early Netherlandish painting.

In another example, Angelo Tani commissioned a triptych for his burial chapel in Badia Fiesolana in Fiesole. The *Last Judgment Triptych* [1473, Fig. 3.12], nearly equal in size to the *Greverade Triptych*, was also a large assignment for the Memling workshop. The triptych, however, was rerouted en route to London when a Hanse pirate ship captured it off the English coast, so the altarpiece never made it to its intended destination. As a result, the triptych was installed in the Hanse city of Danzig (Gdańsk) where it still remains. Barbara Lane argues that the work was a product of the patron’s demands, and if this triptych actually reached its intended location, would have been the most celebrated Flemish altarpiece in Florence. Likewise, Nuttall estimates that this

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513 See Cat. Nos. 9 and 11 in De Vos, *Memling.*
514 Nuttall, *From Flanders to Florence*, p. 61; on the *Portinari Triptych*, see pp. 60-69.
515 Lane, *Memling*, p. 135.
work “would have been the first large early Netherlandish triptych to reach Florence.”

To be sure, the effort spent on behalf of the Medici bank to return the Memling Last Judgment Triptych from Danzig to Florence further proves the esteemed cultural and financial value of Memling’s work—and of Flemish painted retables in general—in the late fifteenth century.

It is reasonable to assume that the Greverades sought similar artistic and social associations in their Memling altarpiece from Flanders, like Moreel and the commissioning Florentine merchants, Portinari and Tani. Moreover, Maximiliaan Martens argues that commissioning a Memling painting and displaying it in a prominent position was the leading way to demonstrate wealth and status in Bruges around 1480. Since the Greverades traveled intermittently to Bruges for decades, and were locally respected and integrated, they certainly would have been aware of other patrons and the types of painting done in local workshops. The arrival of Memling’s Greverade Triptych at Lübeck demonstrates that the Greverade patrician family was consumers of Netherlandish art, but also mediators in the mobility of culture between the regions.

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516 Nuttall, From Flanders to Florence, p. 53.
THE GREVERADE DIPTYCH AND GREGORMESSE
IN ST. MARIENKIRCHE

Back in Lübeck, the Greverades continued to be active patrons throughout the 1490s. During this decade, in addition to running the Greverade Company and participating in civic rituals along with the Circle Society and Merchants Company, the family also founded a chapel in St. Marienkirche in 1493, and commissioned the local workshops of Hermen Rode and Bernt Notke to furnish the chapel with painted panels. Both Rode’s and Notke’s works were destroyed in the bombing of Lübeck in March 1942, so they are only available to us today through pre-war photographs. Notably, Rode’s and Notke’s works were entirely comprised of painted panels—that is, devoid entirely of sculpture—so they, truly stood out from the patterns of mercantile patronage in the Hanse city. Similar to the associated status and prestige in acquiring a Memling altarpiece, the Greverade family continued to use painted retables to distinguish themselves in the city.

The Greverade family turned to Hermen Rode to execute a second painted retable for their chapel of the Holy Cross (*Hl. Kreuzkapelle*), the Virgin Mary, Sts. John the Evangelist, and Jerome in St. Mary Church [Fig. 2.37].519 On 24 February 1494, the

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519 Founded on March 3, 1493, the chapel was in the northern tower in St. Mary Church and the following year in February 1494, the brothers Heinrich and Adolph founded the vicary. The altarpiece was relocated to another chapel in 1761. For full bibliography see: *Corpus der Mittelalterlichen Holzskulptur und Tafelmalerei in Schleswig-Holstein, Bd. II, Die Werke im Stadtgebiet*, ed. Uwe Albrecht (Kiel: Ludwig, 2002), Cat. Nr. *13. More recently, see Anja Rasche, “Hermen Rodes Greveraden-Diptychon nebst einigen Anmerkungen zu den zwei verwandten Werken Schinkel-Retabel und Dreieilheiligentafel” in *Palmarum 1942*, ed. Uwe Albrecht (Kiel: Ludwig, 2013), pp. 139-165; ibid., “Das Greveraden-Diptychon aus der Marienkirche in Lübeck von 1494” in *Studien zu Hermen*
brothers Heinrich and Adolph Greverade endowed a vicarage through the Lübeck Bishop Theodor Arndes for an altar in the chapel and ordered the retable from Rode that same year. Now referred to as the Greverade Diptych [Figs. 3.14-3.16], its modern appellation derives from its structure, three painted panels hinged together to form a diptych. The diptych form itself was not foreign to the St. Marienkirche; the “Old” Bergenfahrer Altarpiece in the Bergenfahrer Chapel from c. 1420 was also a diptych [Fig. 2.45]; and after Rode’s Greverade Diptych in 1494, the “New” Bergenfahrer Altarpiece from 1522-24 also took the diptych form [Fig. 2.59]. The Bergenfahrer Chapel was next to the Greverade Chapel in the St. Marienkirche, so there was clearly a friendly competition among merchant groups and their altarpieces in Lübeck’s main patrician church [Fig. 2.37].

The iconography of the Greverade Diptych comes from the dedicated saints of the chapel: the Virgin Mary, Sts. John the Evangelist, and Jerome, and the Holy Cross, which is repeated twice on the closed and open views. The closed view showed the Crucifixion, painted in grisaille with Christ in the center, flanked by the Virgin, St. John the Evangelist, and St. Jerome [Fig. 3.14]. This exterior scene is set within an austere

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The inscription on the gate to the chapel was destroyed in 1942, but recorded in Fredrich Bruns, Die Bau- und Kunstdenkmäler der Freien und Hansestadt Lübeck. Bd. II: Petrikirche, Marienkirche, Heil.-Geist-Hospital (Lübeck: Nöhring, 1906), p. 257.

These merchant altarpieces are addressed in Chapter Two. All these works are now destroyed. See Corpus I Cat. No. 28; Corpus II. Cat. No. *25. Rasche compares the form to the Schinkel Altarpiece, painted in 1501, and the Dreiheiligen-tafel from 1480-90 in “Hermen Rodes Greveraden-Diptychon,” pp. 157-160.
background that recalls the architectural features of an apse in a church and is devoid of any interior decoration. The composition is structured around Christ, in which the holy figures of St. John the Evangelist and the Virgin are represented on a smaller scale than St. Jerome. Identifiable by his main attributes of the Cardinal’s hat, lion, and stone, St. Jerome turns toward Christ with his right hand on his heart. The inscription in early humanistic typeface below the figures reads, “Look, you who pass by, you are the reason for my pain. In the year of our Lord 1494,” directly addressing the viewer and referencing the dedicated saints of the chapel, Holy Cross, the Virgin Mary, Sts. John the Evangelist, and Jerome.522

When opened, the second view reveals two panels conjoined, with the Death of the Virgin on the left and the Calvary on the right [Figs. 3.13, 3.15]. Rode set the scene of the Death of the Virgin in a contemporary wealthy bedroom, complete with sumptuous textiles, decorated tiles, and elaborate wood molding. An angel closes the eyes of the prostrate Virgin—a detail reminiscent of Conrad von Soest’s Mary Altarpiece in Dortmund [Fig. 2.10]. This crowded interior scene is filled with the twelve apostles, and above the scene a nude soul of Mary is surrounded by four angels. The main panel of the altarpiece (Haupttaufel) is Christ in the Calvary. In this multi-figured panel, two figure groups, the Virgin, John, and Mary Magdalene on one side, and the riders on horseback on the other side, flank Christ. Behind the Crucifixion scene, Rode represents various

stages of the Passion in miniature form, including Christ Bearing the Cross in a procession away from a generically painted Holy Land city view.

In the far right of the panel, St. Jerome kneels in front of a Crucified Christ [Fig. 3.16, detail]. The Greverade family favored St. Jerome, who is also prominently represented on the closed view of the *Greverade Diptych*, as well as in the second view of Memling’s *Greverade Triptych*. Moreover, both chapels in St. Mary Church and the Cathedral were dedicated to the patristic saint. Indeed, the reverence of the Greverades for St. Jerome must have been widely known, as Erasmus wrote in a letter addressed to Canon Adolph Greverade (“Greveradus advocatus”) in 18 December 1497, asking the Lübecker to collaborate on editing Jerome’s writings. It seems likely that Adolph or Heinrich requested Jerome to be represented specifically in both painted retables bearing the Greverades’ names.

In limiting his work to painted diptych form, Rode’s *Greverade Diptych* stands apart from other works in his œuvre and other works made in the city in the 1490s. The exterior of the diptych is framed by late Gothic tracery ornament that recalls the sculpted interior scenes of contemporaneous Netherlandish carved altarpieces. The resemblance of Netherlandish forms is further deepened from Rode’s employment of grisaille on the closed view. We have seen this Netherlandish motif in Memling’s altarpieces, especially the *Greverade Altarpiece* in Lübeck. Rode, like Memling, mimics the appearance of sculpture in painted form.

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We can also see Rode’s knowledge of Netherlandish forms in the painted textiles in the open view of the diptych. In particular, Mary’s bedding features a rich pattern of dogs and flowers. The Calvary scene includes brocades on the sleeves of Mary’s retinue as well as the Orientalized clothing of the tormentors of Christ. In Rode’s earlier works, the artist had also painted rich textiles, but none were as elaborate as in the *Greverade Diptych*. The use of textiles in the diptych marked such a change from Rode’s earlier works that Max Hasse described the panel as a “feast for the eyes” (“Augenschmaus”).

As a result of the visual similarities to early Netherlandish painted motifs, scholars have used Rode’s work to date the arrival of Memling’s altarpiece in Lübeck, assuming that Rode must have copied Memling after its arrival [Fig. 3.17]. In particular, Max Hasse suggested that Memling’s painted retable was first placed in the Chapel of the Holy Cross in St. Mary’s Church before the Cathedral chapel was ready, meaning that both works were in the same chapel for a short period. Alternatively, Harold Busch postulates that if the *Greverade Altarpiece* was originally in St. Mary Church, Hermen Rode’s *Greverade Diptych* then replaced the Memling painted retable. However, given the iconographic specificity of the *Passion Triptych*, Memling’s retable was certainly intended for the cathedral and not the St. Marienkirche. It seems most likely that the Memling work was not in Lübeck before 1494, so Rode remained unfamiliar with Memling’s *Greverade Triptych* to paint his *Greverade Diptych*.

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525 Hasse suggests that Rode was entirely dependent on Memling, which explains their iconographic similarities, in *Hans Memlings Lübecker Altarschrein*, pp. 6-7.
It also seems plausible that Rode executed this painted altar retable, which was entirely unprecedented for the local artist, based on the contract that was likely laid out with Memling, and not necessarily directly from Memling’s altarpiece. While we have neither any original contract for the painted retables from the workshops, other period workshops stipulate the size, material, and often, the iconography.\textsuperscript{527} Assuming that the Memling altarpiece was delayed due the funding of the vicarage in the cathedral, the Greverades could have then turned to a local artist, Hermen Rode, to execute a painted retable in a similar theme—and possibly style—for their chapel in the St. Marienkirche.

Rode did not simply copy Memling. It is also worth considering the family’s motivations for turning to Rode to execute this diptych. Rode received a prestigious commission from Reval in 1478 for the High Altar of the St. Nicholas Church [Figs. 3.28-3.33]. So, the elite and wealthy Greverade brothers sought the well-established local workshop to furnish their chapel, possibly as a prestigious, local equivalent to the famous Memling from Bruges. Accordingly, the iconographic and material similarities between Rode’s \textit{Greverade Diptych} and Memling’s \textit{Greverade Triptych} stem in part from the motivations of the shared patrons, the Greverade family, and not the lack of imagination from Hermen Rode.

To be sure, Memling’s \textit{Passion Altarpiece} did not arrive in Lübeck until after Memling’s death in 1494, a late moment itself for the movement of early Netherlandish painting in that style. Even though Memling’s \textit{Passion Altarpiece} did not directly

\textsuperscript{527} On Lübeck contracts see Chapter Two for the \textit{St. Anthony Altarpiece} and “\textit{New” Bergenfahrer Altarpiece}. See also note above on contracts in the Netherlands.
influence the style of Lübeck painting, the prestige of painting from the Low Countries was undoubtedly recognized and valued. Both Paula Nuttall and Barbara Lane have convincingly demonstrated how Memling and other Netherlandish painters also influenced Italian painters in the 1470s and 1480s in terms of style, composition, and quality.\textsuperscript{528} In the specific case of Lübeck, Rode’s \textit{Greverade Diptych}, that artist’s last known dated work, clearly shows his knowledge of Netherlandish image forms, especially the multi-figured arrangement of figures in a domestic bourgeois setting and the abundance of textiles. Stephan Kemperdick states that Rode may have been familiar with Memling’s oeuvre in general, given the connections between Lübeck and Bruges, as well as the shared client of the Greverades.\textsuperscript{529} Even more likely, Rode gained knowledge of Netherlandish forms from Hans Bornemann [active 1448- d. 1474], who apprenticed in the Netherlands before establishing his workshop in Hamburg.\textsuperscript{530} Rode may have even apprenticed in Bornemann’s workshop.\textsuperscript{531}

Aside from patronage, the precise relationship between Rode and Memling’s altarpieces for the Greverade family remains unclear. If we can assume that Memling’s

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{528}{Lane, \textit{Memling}, pp. 208-215; 221-242. Nuttall, \textit{Flanders to Florence}, pp. 133-159.}
\footnotetext{529}{Kemperdick describes Rode as having an “emotional restraint” and “technical sophistication comparable to Memling, in ibid. See also ibid., “The Impact of Flemish Art on Northern German Painting around 1440” in \textit{Flanders in a European Perspective: Manuscript Illumination around 1400 in Flanders and Abroad}, ed. Maurits Smeyers and Bert Cardon (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), pp. 605-618.}
\footnotetext{530}{Ibid., p. 608.}
\footnotetext{531}{Ibid., p. 611; although Anja Rasche in her monograph of Rode does not propose this direct connection. \textit{Studien zu Hermen Rode}, pp. 28-31. Hamburg painter Wilm Dedecke, who completed the paintings on \textit{the Corpus Christi Altarpiece} (1497) married Bornemann’s daughter, so clearly the Lübeck and Hamburg painters’ Guilds of St. Luke were friendly and familiar with each other.}
\end{footnotes}
Greverade Triptych arrived at the Cathedral no later than 1504—possibly ten years after Rode’s completed panels—it is difficult to ignore how Rode’s Greverade Diptych demonstrates a significant departure from the artist’s earlier style and material. Namely, the use of grisaille is seen here for the first time in the region; additionally, the unusual diptych form marks a significant departure from Rode’s oeuvre as his last work. Is Memling the cause of Rode’s stylistic shift? Or did Rode have access to smaller Netherlandish panels in the absence of the Memling’s delayed delivery to Lübeck? Until evidence proves otherwise, we cannot confidently address these questions. Yet, it does seem plausible that Rode’s Greverade Diptych points to growing knowledge of Netherlandish forms in the North German region. As previously argued, relations between Lübeck and Bruges were at an all-time high in the fifteenth century, so circulated imagery between the Hanse cities seems reasonable. Moreover, Rode would have been certainly aware of the growing popularity of Netherlandish painting motifs and forms, even if he remained working in Lübeck. What is certain is that by the end of the first decade in the sixteenth century, the Greverade’s proud diptych and triptych stood in Lübeck’s largest churches, St. Mary and the Cathedral.

The Greverades funded a new painting tradition in Lübeck, not just by commissioning Memling, but also in commissioning the famed local artist Rode to execute his unique late work in painted diptych form. What is more, shortly after Rode’s work was complete in 1494, and presumably before Memling’s Greverade Triptych was installed in 1504, the Greverade family called on another local workshop to paint an unprecedented painted panel: Adolph Greverade hired Bernt Notke to paint the
Gregormesse, or Mass of St. Gregory [c. 1497-1505, Figs. 3.18-3.23]. It measured approximately 2.50 x 3.57 meters, so it was not only the largest painting attributed to Notke, but was also one of the largest panel paintings by a German artist in the fifteenth century. Like Rode’s Greverade Diptych, this work today only survives in one retouched color photograph [Fig. 3.18], as well as black and white pre-war photographs [Fig. 3.19].

The patronage by the Greverades is the only certainty about this work, since the original location, date, and authorship remain unconfirmed in documentation. The Greverade family is identifiable from the multiple representations of the family crest, a black shield featuring two garlands with white and red roses with a half red and half white flower. The crest is painted on the donor figure’s robe in the bottom right of the painting [Fig. 3.23, detail] and repeated three times on the now-lost baldachin, which

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532 The general consensus on the dating of this work is 1497-1505. Johnny Roosval and Harold Busch argue for an earlier date, c. 1470: in Roosval, “Bernt Notke, peintre” Gazette des Beaux Arts (1937), pp. 227f; and Harold Busch, Bernt Notkes Gregormesse in der Lübecker Marienkirche (New York: Pantheon, 1940); pp. 85. For full bibliography on this object, see Corpus II *23, pp. 540-549.


534 It is believed to have been located at the southern wall of the Holy Cross Chapel. In 1896 Goldschmidt described the work in the Bergenfahrer Chapel, though it was certainly moved there sometime after the Reformation. When it was destroyed, the work was on the southern wall of the Chorkapelle. In Goldschmidt, “Die Gregormesse in der Marienkirche in Lübeck” in Zeitschrift für christliche Kunst, Bd. 9 (1896), p. 225.
hung over the painting *in situ*. Adolph Goldschmidt published the first article on this work in 1896 and attributed the painting to a follower of Quinten Massys, and Carl Georg Heise first attributed the work to Notke in 1926. Following these attributions, Walter Paatz lauded the work as the best example of both Lübeck and Netherlandish art. In short, this work was either attributed to an unknown Netherlandish master, or was continually praised for its Netherlandish qualities.

Until evidence proves otherwise, we can neither confirm nor reject Notke’s attributed authorship [Fig. 3.20]. To be sure, the uncertainty of Notke’s hand also pertains to his questionable attribution of the *Dance of Death* in the Lübeck St. Marienkirche. If the *Gregormesse* were completed in the Notke workshop, it would clearly have been one of the artist’s last monumental commissions. Nonetheless the same can be said for *Rode’s* works.

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535 Ibid., p. 228.
539 For this discussion, see Chapter One.
Greverade Diptych, which was not only the artist’s last work, but was also executed in a material and format not seen by Rode before. In Notke’s earlier works, the itinerant artist finished the double-winged painted and sculpted retables for the Århus Cathedral in 1479 [Fig. 3.48] and the Holy Spirit Church in Reval in 1483 [Figs. 3.39-3.41]. After his travels to Sweden, he is mentioned as returning to Lübeck in 1498, where he stayed before his death in 1509. Therefore it is certainly possible that the Notke workshop executed the panel, but without the original painting for examination, his attribution remains questioned.

The Gregormesse, or Mass of St. Gregory, shows the moment when Christ miraculously materializes before Pope Gregory the Great (r. 590-604). According to the legend, Christ appeared as a sign in response to the Pope’s prayers to convince skeptics of the real presence of Christ in Mass. In the Lübeck Gregormesse, Christ is in front of the kneeling Gregory on an altar table with blood flowing from his wounds into the chalice. Three bishops, three cardinals, three canons, a deacon, a subdeacon, among other clerical figures, all witness this holy event, set inside a late Gothic chapel. Adolph Greverade is probably the figure kneeling to the left of Pope Gregory—a position in line with the tradition of donor portraits [Fig. 3.23]. Adolph was made the canon in 1497, and the commission of this scene potentially stems from Adolph’s new clergy position.

Art historian Andrea Boockmann describes this work as a “group portrait” and attempts to identify the figures as specific members of the Lübeck community, especially

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Cardinal Raimundus Peraudi. According to this logic, Notke’s panel represents the assertions of northern German bishops circa 1500. Most recently, art historian Miriam Hoffmann has compared the iconography of the Lübeck scene to prints in Lübeck of the same subject—not as a group portrait of Greverade’s contemporaries, but as a theological discourse on the Mass of St. Gregory in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. To be sure, the Mass of St. Gregory was certainly a popular subject in late fifteenth-century painting, prints, and sculpture, and the Lübeck painting undoubtedly stood as a proud northern German example.

While the motivations behind the commission of this work remain uncertain, it is clear that the Gregormesse employed both local and Netherlandish visual traditions. For example, the painted predella on the altar is represented in the North German style, which shows a row of half-figured saints on a monochrome background with banderoles flowing between the busts [Fig. 3.24]. This type of predella was typical for the region,

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541 In particular Boockmann argues that the figures all relate to Cardinal Raimundus Peraudi (1435-1505) in Lübeck; the three bishops are Dietrich Arndes from Lübeck, Detlev Pogwisch from Schleswig, and Johannes Parkentin von Ratzeberg. See Boockmann, “Das zerstörte Gemälde der ‘Gregormesse’ von Bernt Notke in der Marienkirche und die Aufenthalt des Kardinals Raimundus Peraudi in Lübeck 1503” ZVLGA 81 (2001): pp. 105-122; esp. 110.


also seen on the final view in Rode’s *Sts. Nicholas and Viktor Altarpiece* in Reval [Fig. 3.33], among others. Moreover, the figure to the left of the retable holds a peacock feather [Fig. 3.21]. This detail recalls another major work in Lübeck, also representing the Mass of St. Gregory: the sculpted shrine of the *Corpus Christi Altarpiece* in the Burg from 1495-1497 [Fig. 2.31], carved by the local artist Henning van der Heide. The peacock feather was likely used at the time to ward off flies from the Eucharist wafer, but it was also a luxury item. For instance, in the inventory of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads in Riga, a peacock feather is listed. Both northern German details, the predella and peacock feather, potentially confirm a local workshop.

When compared to the firmly attributed Mass of St. Gregory on the second view of the Århus Cathedral by the Notke workshop, the *Gregormesse* in the Marienkirche represents an inverse composition [Figs. 3.25-3.26]. In the Århus version, Notke highlights St. Gregory with a gold halo, and he reserves red and gold brocaded textiles for St. Gregory and his tonsured servant. In the Lübeck *Gregormesse*, the action shifts from the miraculous appearance of Christ to the interactions of the clergy in the composition; the end result places the donor, Canon Adolph Greverade, within the vision of St. Gregory.

Memling’s *Greverade Triptych* in the Cathedral, Rode’s *Greverade Diptych*, and Notke’s *Gregormesse* in the St. Marienkirche stood as proud symbols for the well-

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544 Hamburg-based painter Wilm Dedecke painted the *Gregormesse* on the second view of this work. See Chapter Two.
established patrician Greverade family in Lübeck. Based on the iconography, style, and format of these three works, the three artists all likely catered to the demands of the Greverades. The patron’s demands, however, seem to have resisted city visual tradition. Since the majority of commissioned altarpieces in the fifteenth century in Lübeck were commissioned by collective mercantile groups and consistently conform to the Lübeck standard of carved and painted double-winged altarpieces, the Greverades’ three painted works must have been doubly noticeable. On the distinction of the Greverade family, former Lübeck archivist Antjekathrin Graßmann summarizes their business acumen: “More than through kinship, social prestige is achieved through a certain self-made-man character. In the Greverade Company, one paid more attention to prosperity than to tradition.”

As long-distance, elite merchants in Lübeck, the Greverades endowed specific devotional spaces to showcase these works. They did so not only through the Memling commission, but also by turning to local artists and challenging the local painting tradition with a single-media painted format and a creative mixture of northern German, Westphalian, and Netherlandish styles.

From these commissions, the Greverade family clearly played the role of consumer well. Yet, the Greverades also acted as mediators in the mobility of art from Lübeck workshops. For example, in 1455 or 1456, the monastery deacon, Brother Rotgerus, ordered a new altarpiece from Lübeck for the Birgittine monastery in Vadstena.

Sweden [1459, Fig. 3.27].⁵⁴⁷ Heinrich Greverade (the Elder, d.1468) served as the local representative to facilitate the transaction, and he commissioned the Lübeck woodcarver, Hans Hesse (active c. 1400-1459). Greverade was likely selected because of his close trade ties to Sweden with the Greverade Company. Greverade paid Hesse 300 Lübeck marks in advance, and the woodcarver traveled to Vadstena, presumably to negotiate the design and iconography. In addition to the Lübeck marks, Hesse received a new coat with polecat lining (comparable to a ferret), a horse while in Vadstena; further, upon his return to Lübeck, he received an additional three barrels of salted beef, five large pieces of cheese, and an allowance for expenses.⁵⁴⁸ Despite these generous payments, Hesse embezzled the money and fled from Lübeck, where his half-finished altarpiece remained unfinished. When Brother Rotgerus inquired about the status of the altarpiece, Greverade and other Lübeck merchants intervened, advising the monastery deacon to hire a second local Lübeck artist, Johannes Stenrat (c. 1410-1484), to complete the altarpiece.⁵⁴⁹ The


⁵⁴⁸ The value of these goods totaled to twenty-six marks, in addition to his 300 mark payment. Jan von Bonsdorff estimates that the average Lübeck woodcarver makes sixty annual marks, so the pay was extraordinary high for a single commission. In “Art Transfer,” p. 43.

⁵⁴⁹ Stenrat also completed the sculpture of St. Olaf for the Bergenfahrer guild house, see Ch. 2. On Stenrat and his attributions, see Marageta Kempff, “The Stenrat Workshop: the Case of Renewed Efforts: Problems and Resources of the Art History Medievalist” in Figur und Raum: Mittelalterliche Holzbildwerke im historischen und kunstgeographischen Kontext, eds. Albrecht and Bonsdorff, pp. 178-183 (Berlin: Reimer, 1994); and Kempff, “Johannes Steenrat and Hermen Rode—two Lübeck Masters” in Kunst und Architektur im Baltikum in der Schwedenzeit und andere Studien zur baltischen Kunstgeschichte, pp. 37-43 (Stockholm, 1993).
Abbey paid more than double the original sum. The work was installed in Vadstena in October 1459, where it still stands today.

From this account, in addition to the three Greverade commissions discussed above, we can glean a few more trends in cultural transfer across the Baltic. First, it was not unusual for merchants to act as intermediaries between a long-distance patron and a local workshop. In the particular case of Vadstena, Heinrich Greverade (the Elder) put the commissioner in contact with two separate Lübeck carvers. Second, the commissioning party provided input on the design, and most specifically, on the iconography. For instance, we know that Hesse traveled to the intended location of the work to discuss the intricate iconography of St. Birgitta, the Swedish saint. But in the example of the Hans Memling’s *Greverade Altarpiece*, the commissioner likely traveled to the extraterritorial workshop to negotiate. In addition to custom designs, saints relating to brotherhoods and cities were repeated and often overlap in merchant altarpieces in the Baltic region. For such reasons, the repetition of holy figures throughout Baltic mercantile towns, including Sts. Olaf, Viktor, Nicholas, Gertrude, Barbara, and Dorothy, seem to stem from custom retables, in which lower-end workshops modeled retables after prestigious commissions. Moreover, we see retables across the Baltic conforming to the Lübeck standard of double-winged altarpieces, especially the *Greverade Triptych* that

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550 These saints are in several Lübeck and Baltic altarpieces. See also Chapter Two for the overlap of these saints. Such retables from unknown artists are located across towns in Norway and Sweden, and remain significantly understudied to their Lübeck counterparts.
was Memling’s only work made in the German style. This format was surely requested, demonstrating the widespread desire for the Lübeck standard.

Third, cultural transfer followed trade routes, and often raw materials were exchanged for the artistic product. Lübeck did not manufacture any raw materials, so the merchants specialized in facilitating trade between east and west. Works of art, however, were an exception: Lübeck produced carved and painted altarpieces. It is estimated that in the fifteenth century around 300 carved and painted panels from Lübeck were transported across the Baltic.\(^{551}\) By utilizing their pre-established commercial infrastructure, Lübeck merchants acted as mediators in the transfer of art from Lübeck to Hanse enclaves along the Baltic area. And when we follow the mobility of merchants and works of art to the eastern edge of the Baltic and a third node in Reval, a similar pattern of cultural transfer emerges.

**BROTHERHOOD ALTARS IN REVAL**

Across the Baltic Sea from Lübeck, Reval was a German-speaking town in Livonia, an area that comprises present-day Estonia and Latvia. The three largest cities in late-medieval Livonia—Reval (Tallinn), Riga, and Dorpat (Tartu)—functioned as trade cities within the Hanse network. In particular, Livonian merchants traded fur, flax, and other raw materials from the eastern Baltic for salt from Lüneburg and cloth from the Low Countries. These Hanse cities in Livonia, despite being geographically distant from

\(^{551}\) Quoted in Dollinger, *The German Hansa*, p. 275.
North Germany, were nonetheless economically and culturally connected to the region. German families, originating from Westphalia, Lübeck, and other North German cities, founded the towns in Livonia, so German merchants made up the Livonian elite class. Accordingly, Livonia functioned within the same context as other urban areas in German-speaking lands: the cities were granted German laws, their *lingua franca* was Middle Low German, and cultural practices, such as food, festivals, and devotion, were widely shared.\(^{552}\)

The shared culture between Reval and Lübeck is perhaps most apparent in the organization of the late-medieval towns, where urban corporations entirely comprised of merchants dictated social order. As discussed in the previous chapter, Lübeck boasted seventy urban groups, and the mercantile elite maintained multiple memberships to different guilds, devotional confraternities, and elite societies. Reval also had several

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religious guilds and confraternities who participated in urban rituals and feast day celebrations.\textsuperscript{553}

The two most esteemed urban groups were the Great Guild (\textit{Große Gilde}) and the Brotherhood of the Black Heads (\textit{Bruderschaft der Schwarzenhäupter}). The Great Guild was founded in 1363, and its membership encompassed the established mercantile elite who were German in origin and had the status of citizens in Reval. In addition, admission to the Great Guild was practically a prerequisite for town council membership. The Brotherhood of the Black Heads differentiated themselves from the Great Guild in terms of marital status, citizenship, and mercantile status: the Black Heads were bachelors who traveled across the Baltic, and they often included foreign merchants and journeymen.\textsuperscript{554}

Thus, a typical Reval merchant entered the Brotherhood of the Black Heads at age eighteen until marriage—a short developmental period to learn the trade business before


\textsuperscript{554} Black Heads addressed in documents as journeymen (\textit{geselle}), whereas the Great Guild members were burghers (\textit{bogere}). In Mänd, “Membership and Social Career in Tallinn Merchants’ Guilds,” in \textit{Guilds, Towns, and Cultural Transmission in the North, 1300-1500}, ed. Lars Bisgaard, Lars Boje Mortensen, Tom Pettitt (Odense: Univ. of Southern Denmark, 2013), p. 236.
admission to the Great Guild for life.\textsuperscript{555} It is estimated that the Black Heads numbered one hundred members on average, and the Great Guild boasted 120-140, demonstrating that merchants consisted of a small, but powerful minority.\textsuperscript{556} The prestige of Lübeck’s \textit{Zirkelgesellschaft} parallels Reval’s Great Guild, in that membership to the merchant corporation was nearly a prerequisite for admission to the town council. Therefore, membership to the Great Guild marked the highest social position obtainable. Furthermore, Black Heads’ Brothers also belonged to Lübeck confraternities. For example, Bernd Pal (ca. 1437-1503), who lived in both Reval and Lübeck, served as a member of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads as well as three confraternities in Lübeck: St. Anthony, St. Leonhard, and Corpus Christi.\textsuperscript{557}

The function of these leading urban groups in Reval included \textit{memoria} for the dead, dedication and maintenance of altars in several churches in the city, and urban ritual.\textsuperscript{558} The Great Guild maintained four altars, two in both parish churches; likewise, the Black Heads had three altars.\textsuperscript{559} Most importantly, the Great Guild and the Black Heads co-sponsored and maintained altars, demonstrating that altar production stemmed from the collective interests held by the mercantile urban elite in the city. In particular,

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{556} Ibid., p. 176.
\textsuperscript{557} See Chapter Two on the interwoven memberships in Lübeck, and in ibid., p. 180
\textsuperscript{558} Ibid., “Church Art, Commemoration of the Dead and the Saints’ Cult: Constructing Individual and Corporate \textit{Memoria} in Late Medieval Tallinn” \textit{Acta Historica Tallinnensia} 16 (2011): pp. 3-30.
\textsuperscript{559} Anu Mänd and Anneli Randla, “Sacred Space and Corporate Identity: The Black Heads’ Chapels in the Mendicant Churches of Tallinn and Riga” \textit{Baltic Journal of Art History} (Fall 2012), p. 46.
\end{flushleft}
three corporate merchant altarpieces from extraterritorial workshops survive today in Reval/Tallinn: Hermen Rode’s *Sts. Nicholas and Viktor Altarpiece* [1478-81, Figs. 3.28-3.33], Bernt Notke’s *Altarpiece of Church of the Holy Spirit* [1483, Figs. 3.39-3.41], and the Master of St. Lucy Legend’s *Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary for the Brotherhood of the Black Heads* [c. 1493, Figs. 3.50-3.52]. In addition, textual description survives for a now-lost carved and painted *Altarpiece of the Holy Trinity* for the Brotherhood of the Black Heads (1436). These devotional works attest to the role of cultural transfer in the dissemination of art across the Baltic Sea region: in extra-territorial cities, Hanse merchants acted dually as consumers and mediators in the mobility and local reception of art objects.

**STS. NICHOLAS AND VIKTOR ALTARPICE**

In 1481 the *Altarpiece of St. Nicholas and St. Viktor* [Figs. 3.28-3.33] arrived from the Hermen Rode workshop in Lübeck to adorn the high altar of the Church of St. Nicholas in Reval.560 The altarpiece stood as a symbol for the collective enterprise of Reval merchants: the Brotherhood of the Black Heads and the Great Guild, whose coats of arms are repeated multiple times throughout the work, as well as the town of Reval collectively pooled their resources to commission the high altar in 1478. In the following year, 1479, the wardens of St. Nicholas initiated a collection to the entire town and

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560 On this work, see Anja Rasche, “Das Nikolaikircheretabel in Tallinn/Reval von 1481” in *Studien zu Hermen Rode*, pp. 97-152.
encouraged individual donations.\footnote{Merike Kurisoo, “Who Was Hermen Rode? On a Master from Lübeck in the Late Medieval Baltic Region” in \textit{Rode Altarpiece in Close-Up. History, Technical Investigation and Conservation of the Retable of the High Altar of Tallinn’s St. Nicholas’ Church (2013-2016)}, ed. Hilkka Hiiop and Merike Kurisoo (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstikadeemia, 2016), p. 42.} The altarpiece cost 1250 Riga marks, which is the comparable period cost to two stone houses or a new ship.\footnote{Mänd, “Symbols that Bind Community,” p. 121.} The commissioning parties clearly spared little cost in this impressive altarpiece for the parish church: we can see this in the size of the altar, which measures, open, at three and a half meters high and six meters wide, making this one of the largest high altarpieces in the Baltic region.

Moreover, the transfer of the altarpiece depended on the master organization of the trade connections between Lübeck and Reval. The Lübeck merchant Bertold Rikman organized the commission, and Heinrik van dem Brok managed the transport and installation of the work.\footnote{Ibid.}

The commissioned retable conforms to the Lübeck standard, with two sets of painted wings and an elaborately carved \textit{corpus} and wings on the final opening. Also typical of altarpieces in the last quarter of the fifteenth century stemming from Lübeck, the represented saints in the altarpiece program cater specifically to both urban groups as well as its destination in Reval. The iconography of the altarpiece shows that the Brotherhood of the Black Heads and the Great Guild dictated the program. The altarpiece is dedicated to Saints Nicholas and Viktor, two patron saints with close ties to the region: St. Nicholas served as the patron saint of the parish church and the dedicated high altar where the altar was installed; and St. Viktor of Marseilles was the patron saint of Reval.
Both saints are repeated in painted and carved forms throughout all openings of the altarpiece, as well as in the other altarpieces sponsored by the Great Guild and the Brotherhood of the Black Heads.

The closed view of the altarpiece includes two painted wings with flattened crown tracery above and a painted predella below [Fig. 3.28]. The closed view shows three female holy figures: St. Catherine, the Virgin and Child, and St. Barbara on the left; and three male figures on the right, Sts. Viktor, Nicholas, and George. Each figure holds an attribute for easy identification, although these saints would have been readily identifiable for the local viewing community in late-medieval Reval. Moreover, these saints on the closed view were popular saints for sailing Hanse merchants in the Baltic region. St. Nicholas, the namesake of the high altar and church, served as the patron saint of sailors, merchants, travellers, craftsmen, and children. St. Barbara was associated with good death, and for that reason, Sts. Barbara and Nicholas are repeated throughout merchant altarpieces in the Baltic Sea area. St. Viktor was the patron saint of Reval, and St. George a favorite warrior saint of both the Great Guild and the Brotherhood of the Black Heads; similarly, St. Catherine was popular with local friars, and in addition, the Brotherhood of the Black Heads congregated at St. Catherine’s Church of the Dominicans in Reval. Finally, the Virgin Mary was the patron saint of Livonia. This assemblage of saints is partially due to the veneration of multiple saints by the Great

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564 St. Nicholas was the bishop of the town of Myra in the fourth century. On the vita of St. Nicholas and its relevance to Tallinn, see Mänd, “Saints’ Cults in Medieval Livonia,” pp. 205-209.
565 On the Black Heads’ altar in St. Catherine’s Church of the Franciscans in Riga, see Mänd and Randla, “Sacred Space,” pp. 43-80.
Guild and the Brotherhood of the Black Heads. Rode accordingly tailored the exterior wings to the patron saints of both merchant groups as well as to the intended location of the altarpiece in Reval, Livonia.

The sponsorship of the Great Guild and Black Heads is made explicit on the exterior view of the altarpiece. Below the standing six saints are the two coats of arms of the commissioning urban groups: a red shield with a white cross for the Great Guild, and a white shield with the profile of a black head for the Brotherhood of the Black Heads [Fig. 3.36]. More specifically, the shield of the Black Heads shows St. Maurice, a third century knight revived and revered in the Hanse town of Magdeburg in the thirteenth century. Here, St. Maurice recalls the other warrior saints throughout the altar program, as well as in other visual programs in Black Heads’ chapels in both Reval and Riga.566

Adolph Goldschmidt was the first to attribute this work to the Lübeck master Hermen Rode in 1901 based on stylistic comparison to Rode’s Lübeck Altarpiece of St. Luke for the local guild of painters and glaze rs [c. 1485, Fig. 3.37].567 For instance, Rode’s Altarpiece for St. Luke in Lübeck [Fig. 3.38, cf. both works] features a nearly identical predella and closed wings in terms of structure and color palette. Rode tended to use a bright color scheme to showcase standing saints—a hallmark of northern German style. In Reval’s closed view, Rode represents the six standing holy figures beneath

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painted stonework Gothic tracery with a unified verdant landscape. The same background color is repeated in the painted predella, showing Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Benedict, and the four church fathers, Sts. Gregory, Jerome, Augustine, and Ambrose [Fig. 3.28]. In comparing the closed altarpiece wings in Lübeck and Reval, we can see the difference from Rode’s multi-figured and crowded *Greverade Diptych* from 1494, which deviates from his earlier painted works that frame individual saints.

When opened, an elaborate painted program around the lives of Sts. Nicholas and Viktor is revealed [Fig. 3.29-3.31]. The paintings of the second opening are arranged in a grid-like pattern, a common feature of the Lübeck standard in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. Both visual programs are based on *The Golden Legend (Legenda aurea)*, compiled by Jacobus de Voragine. The life of St. Nicholas occupies the left wing and center left wing, occupying eight painted narrative scenes with a text inscription in Middle Low German for easy identification [Figs. 3.30-3.31], the primary language of Hanse merchants, further pointing to the strong cultural ties to Lübeck. The same pattern repeats on the right side, representing the life of St. Viktor, the patron saint of Reval, who was also venerated by the town council, the two merchants associations, and other social groups. Rode and his workshop painted a clear narrative of both saints, who can be readily identifiable for the seafaring audience.

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Two particular scenes in the first open view refer directly to the status of Reval as a trade city in the Hanse. In the fourth scene of St. Nicholas’s *vita* [Fig. 3.32, detail 4], the holy figure saves sailors aboard a Hanseatic cog ship (*Hansekogge*), the primary seafaring vessel for Hanse merchants in the late fifteenth century.\(^{570}\) The inscription below the image reads, “Here the shipmen suffered greatly from the storm and wind; they invoked Saint Nicholas and he helped them.”\(^{571}\) In Rode’s painted view, a larger-than-life St. Nicholas appears before the cog, which includes details to contextualize this scene within a Hanse context. The cog is in despair with a broken mast and barrels of goods lost into the sea. Rode casts this scene into a Hanseatic context: at the front of the cog hang four flags, marked with the coats of arms of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads and the Great Guild.

Rode relates another scene from the life of St. Viktor to the Hanseatic community of Reval. In the final painted scene of the first view, Rode shows the death of St. Viktor with the skyline of Lübeck in the background [Fig. 3.32, detail 8].\(^{572}\) As discussed in the first chapter, the city view of Lübeck in Reval’s altarpiece brands the work in terms of Lübeck authorship and also functions as a mark of quality for the Lübeck-made work of

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\(^{570}\) A Hanseatic cog is a modern term a type of vessel with a large carrying capacity for goods, often flat bottomed. On the cog, see Dollinger, *The German Hansa*, pp. 141-142.


art. The inscription below the image reads, “Here they cast his body into the sea and the angels bring him to the land and he is honorably buried.” St. Viktor’s body is not cast into sea as the inscription reads, but on the shores of the Wakenitz River in Lübeck. It is worth noting that when viewed, the image of the martyrdom of St. Viktor with its Lübeck skyline would be the last image read on the open altarpiece.

The painted program of the first opening translates the lives of Sts. Nicholas and Viktor into a local context: these saints will protect you at sea. We can see that the message of these scenes further reinforces the connections between the two trade cities, as well as between the Hanse merchants who travel between them. To be sure, this scene provides a familiar site to many of the merchants involved in sponsoring this work, but it also reassures the viewers about Hanse trade. Simply put, Rode visually reinforces Hanseatic imagery to this Hanse mercantile audience.

The festive view unfolds to feature two registers of individually framed, polychrome saints within late Gothic canopies [Fig. 3.33]. This second opening to the final view of the altarpiece conforms to the Lübeck standard: sculpture occupies both the rectangular shrine and the wings. The dominance of sculpture over panel painting in the festive view of Lübeck-type altarpieces typically showcases a combination of painted wings attached to a carved shrine. For this reason, Rode’s *St. Nicholas and Viktor Altarpiece* closely resembles the fourteenth-century altarpieces in North Germany, such as Master Bertram’s *Grabower Altar* [1379-83, Hamburg Kunsthalle], more than the

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573 “Hir werpen se synen lycha in dat mer und de engele brochten en to lande und wart erliken begraven.” In *Rode Altar*, p. 128.
artist’s contemporaries, then making altarpieces in southern Germany or the Low Countries. The format of the Lübeck standard centers on a low-wide, horizontal shrine, and features multiple registers of individually carved saints framed by various decorative elements, particularly thinly carved tracery. By the fifteenth century, Lübeck standard altarpieces included double wings, reserving sculpture for the final view only. Also distinct to the North German region is the small, horizontal crown of decorative tracery; Lübeck altarpieces do not feature a massive, vertical superstructure like their southern German counterparts. Rather, the horizontal form of corpus and wings are accentuated through the flattened crown of tracery, which transforms the physical outline of the altarpiece to resemble a squat container.

The iconography of the festive view also follows the tradition of the Lübeck standard, so the carved shrine and wings cater to the Hanse mercantile audience. The program of the shrine accommodated a wide breadth of devotional needs, so Rode includes thirty-two sculpted holy figures [Fig. 3.34]. Each saint is polychromed, likely by Rode himself, and is separated by miniature carved Old Testament prophets in jambs. Behind each saint is a sketch of the saint’s attribute [Fig. 3.35]. These graphite markings, presumably done by the Rode workshop, were revealed during the restoration of the altarpiece in Moscow in the 1980s, and again from 2013-2016 during the major restoration funded by the Estonian government. The sketches further attest to the planned design of the altar program in accordance with the consumer’s demands.

574 Kurisoo “Hermen Rode,” p. 47.
The center of the corpus features the Holy Family with the Virgin and Child with Anne on the bottom row, and the Coronation of the Virgin above. St. Nicholas and St. Viktor bookend the sculpted program at the top left and right registers, respectively. The warrior St. Viktor holds his shield, which bears the coats of arms of the Great Guild. The predella, typical of the North German painted format, includes polychrome carved saints and two small, painted wings relating to the Holy Kinship. The festive sculpture is entirely tailored to the local context, providing individually framed saints for the mercantile audience in Reval.

Several carved saints in Rode’s Sts. Nicholas and Viktor Altarpiece overlap with the iconography of merchant altarpieces in Lübeck and form part of the shared devotion and culture of merchants in the late-medieval Baltic. For example, Sts. Bartholomew, Thomas, Dorothy, Barbara, Catherine, Blaise, Gertrude, Bridget, and Elizabeth are also represented in painted or carved form in various combinations in Lübeck merchant saints carved in order, from top left to right: Sts. Nicholas, Apostles Matthew, Bartholomew, Thomas, Andrew, John, Peter, Paul, James, Philip, Simon, Jude, and Matthias; bottom row left to right: Sts. Apollonia, Dorothy, Barbara, Catherine, Reinhold, Blasius, John the Baptist, Michael, Lawrence, George, Mary Magdalene, Gertrude, Bridget, and Elizabeth.

576 Saints carved in order, from top left to right: Sts. Nicholas, Apostles Matthew, Bartholomew, Thomas, Andrew, John, Peter, Paul, James, Philip, Simon, Jude, and Matthias; bottom row left to right: Sts. Apollonia, Dorothy, Barbara, Catherine, Reinhold, Blasius, John the Baptist, Michael, Lawrence, George, Mary Magdalene, Gertrude, Bridget, and Elizabeth.

577 The carved saints depict the members of St. Anne’s family, including: the three husbands of St. Anne, Joachim, Cleophas, Salome, and the husband of Mary, Joseph, as well as Mary of Cleophas and Mary of Salome, with their husbands, Alpheus and Zebedee. The inner left wing of the predella shows the painted saints Elizabeth, Zechariah, St. John the Baptist, Esmeria, Efraim, Eliud, and Elisabeth. The inner right wing depicts Eliud, Emerentia, Enim, Memelia, and Servatius. Iconographic identification from Rode Altar, p. 88.
altarpieces from the last quarter of the fifteenth century. To be sure, Rode maintained a workshop in Lübeck, and this altarpiece was made in Lübeck; however, the iconographic and structural similarities point to a larger shared interest of collective belonging among the Hanseatic merchant communities in the Baltic.

**ALTARPIECE OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

The transfer of culture between the Hanse enclave in Reval and its sister Hanse city Lübeck was renewed when the Great Guild turned again to Lübeck for another altarpiece. This time the Great Guild contracted Bernt Notke, the other well-established Baltic artist from Lübeck. Now titled *Altarpiece of the Church of the Holy Spirit* [Figs. 3.39-3.41], the work stands as the high altar in the Holy Spirit Church in Reval. As discussed elsewhere in this dissertation, the Notke workshop received commissions from across the Baltic in Lübeck, Denmark, and Sweden. Therefore, when the members of the Great Guild commissioned Notke to furnish their Reval high altar, they too were using altarpieces to make a proud assertion of Baltic brotherhood status. The authorship of Notke and his workshop is firmly attributed, based on a 1484 letter, addressed to Burgomeister Diderick Hagenbeke and to the wardens of the Holy Spirit Church, in which Notke requests the completion of payment from the town council.579

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578 See Chapter Two on the iconography of merchant altarpieces, as well as Mänd, “Saints’ Cults in Medieval Livonia,” pp. 205-211.
579 Mänd, *Bernt Notke*, p. 63; letter reproduced on page 71. It is also important to note here that this is one of three works firmly attributed to Notke though archival documentation. The other two include the altarpiece at Århus Cathedral and the Triumphal Cross in Lübeck. All other works by Notke are attributed based on style, and some attributions are questioned still to this day. See also Krista Andreson, “Research on...
The altarpiece conforms to the Lübeck standard with two sets of wings, a painted pictorial cycle on the first view, and carved corpus and wings on the final or festive view. Each opening includes multiple representations of the Great Guild coats of arms, a red shield with a white cross. This symbol, moreover, also formed the coats of arms of Reval—further illustrating the interwoven participation of the Great Guild and the town council. Likewise, the Holy Spirit Church was the main patrician church of the town council, located across the street from the Great Guild House; so its proximal location granted easy access for both the brothers and town council members to their shared civic, mercantile, and devotional spaces. Thus, the multiple representations of the coats of arms throughout the painted and sculpted altarpiece visibly unite the retable to the brotherhood and city leaders.

In the late-medieval era, the Church of the Holy Spirit was also connected with a hospital of the same name. The iconography of the altarpiece dually supports the namesake of the church, the Holy Spirit, and the hospital’s mission in care and comfort of the suffering. The outer wings are attributed to an unknown painter in the Notke workshop, but they certainly stem from North Germany. The exterior view contains two painted wings in color, Christ as the Man of Sorrows and St. Elizabeth of Thuringia, the thirteenth-century patron saint of charitable deeds, beggars, widows, and orphans.

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Each holy figure is placed within a stone niche, in front of which hang an elaborately painted textile and the coats of arms of Reval. On the painted wing with Christ, blood flows into the chalice that rests on the coat of arms, which is decorated with the instruments of the Passion. Above and below the bleeding Christ are the symbols of the Holy Spirit: a white dove and rays of light converge on the Eucharist above the chalice. On the opposite wing, St. Elizabeth holds her attributes, a bowl and water vessel used to care for the sick and poor.

The first opening of the altarpiece unveils a painted cycle of the Passion of Christ on the inner wings and the life of St. Elizabeth on the outer wings [Fig. 3.40]. This painted cycle is organized according to the standard Lübeck format of a grid-like pattern to maximize multiple narrative scenes. Each painting is framed in a semi-circular golden arch with two coats of arms. These paintings are attributed to the Master of St. Elizabeth and the Tallinn Passion Master, both anonymous masters in the Notke workshop.\footnote{Ibid., p. 307.} The four paintings of Christ’s Passion include: the Carrying of the Cross, Christ before Pilate, the Flagellation, and the Crucifixion.

The program of St. Elizabeth centers on four scenes of her divine revelation, care for the sick and poor, and acts of mercy [Fig. 3.42, details].\footnote{On St. Elizabeth, see Viola Belghaus, “Everybody’s Darling. Transformation of Value and Transformation of Meaning in the Veneration of St. Elizabeth of Thuringia” in Push Me, Pull You. Vol. II: Physical and Spatial Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art, ed. by Sarah Blick and Laura Gelfand (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 179-230. See also St. Elizabeth in Jacobus de Voragine, The Golden Legend, pp. 688-704.} The unknown artist in Notke’s workshop likely drew upon the painted image cycle of St. Elizabeth on the rood
screen of the Holy Ghost Hospital (Heiligen-Geist-Hospital) in Lübeck, dated around 1440 [Fig. 3.43]. The rood screen, attributed to an unknown workshop from Westphalia, features twenty-three images from St. Elizabeth’s *vita*, including the rejection of courtly life and four scenes on St. Elizabeth’s divinity and care for the sick and poor.\textsuperscript{583} It seems that the anonymous Master of St. Elizabeth in Notke’s workshop looked toward this local image source to complete the Reval painted cycle, since three of the four painted scenes on the Reval retable bear striking compositional and narrative resemblance to the Lübeck painted rood screen of the same subject [Fig. 3.44]. Thus, the iconographic specificity of St. Elizabeth as caregiver extends to the hospital context of the Church of the Holy Spirit in Reval, but it also references the local Lübeck hospital context.

The final opening contains polychrome carved figures in the *corpus* and wings [Fig. 3.41]. The shrine depicts the Descent of the Holy Spirit with the Virgin Mary on the Throne, flanked by the Twelve Apostles in the *corpus*. Notke sculpted an animated scene, set in a late Gothic chapel, where the gazes of figures look up to the (now-lost) dove symbolizing of the Holy Spirit [Fig 3.46, detail]. The carved *corpus* is bookended by two small figures holding the Great Guild shield [Fig. 3.47]. On the wings of this final opening are the individually carved figures of Sts. Olaf, Anne, Elizabeth, Viktor, and the Virgin Mary. Hinrik Wylsynck, Notke’s workshop assistant, carved the figures on the wings, but Notke himself probably executed the *corpus* carvings.\textsuperscript{584}

\textsuperscript{583} See Corpus II Cat. Nr. 68 for the full iconographic identification of the program, pp. 223-228.
\textsuperscript{584} On Notke’s workshop, see Petermann, *Bernt Notke*, pp. 109-111.
Once again, the iconography pertains to the destination of the altarpiece in the Holy Spirit Church. The church lay within the parish of St. Olaf, which along with St. Nicholas, formed the two patrician churches in the city. St. Olaf, the patron saint of Norway, is also seen throughout the Baltic in retables in Lübeck and Stralsund. Thus, the representation of St. Olaf also relates this work to the common saints of Hanse merchants in the Baltic. Similarly, St. Viktor was also important locally, as discussed previously in Rode’s *Altarpiece of Sts. Nicholas and Viktor* at the nearby Church of St. Nicholas.

Below each standing figure are four busts of saints with their attributes: Sts. Barbara, John the Baptist, Anthony, and Gertrude. We have seen these saints emphasized in both Lübeck and Reval, in accordance with Lübeck’s merchant brotherhood retables, where the Lübeck standard of altarpieces caters to the mercantile brotherhood community.

Notke deviated from the Lübeck standard to include an elaborate superstructure rather than more austere, squat forms of crowning elements. The superstructure depicts a carved scene of the Coronation of the Virgin, a very common subject in Gothic high-altar retables. Mary is shown in heaven in recognition of her status as mother of Christ. This type of superstructure was used once previously in Notke’s earlier altarpiece in Århus Cathedral, which also has a sculpted scene of the Coronation above the shrine [Fig. 3.48, *High Altarpiece of the Århus Cathedral*, 1479]. Notke’s *Århus Altarpiece* includes a massive painted and gilded baldachin with finials over the opened *corpus* and wings. Commissioned by Jens Iversen Lange, the Bishop of the Århus Cathedral, this work differs from the usual collective enterprise of Hanse merchants for patrician churches.
Of course, any consideration of Lübeck art in Estonia must attend to Bernt Notke’s *Dance of Death* painting, which arrived to Reval sometime at the end of the fifteenth century [Figs. 3.49, Niguliste Museum]. As discussed in the first chapter, the Reval *Dance of Death* was made in Lübeck by the Notke workshop on canvas for easy transport. The work is not mentioned in the account book of the Church of St. Nicholas, so it is believed that an individual or confraternity donated it. Art historian Kristen Petermann in her book-length study on Notke suggests that the range of styles points toward a large workshop, capable of fielding commissions—locally and extraterritorially, including Århus, Stockholm, and Reval. The presence of two works in Reval by the Notke workshop from the last decades of the fifteenth century demonstrates the close connections between Reval and Lübeck, as well as the role merchants played as mediators in facilitating the mobility of works of art.

**ALTARPiece OF THE VIRGIN MARY FOR THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE BLACK HEADS**

The *Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary for the Brotherhood of the Black Heads* arrived in Reval from Bruges sometime after the year 1493 [Figs. 3.50-3.52]. In the Brotherhood account book, the work is described as a “new panel” (“*neye taffel*”) that “came from the west” (“*van westen komen*”) via Lübeck (“*van westen to lubek*”), and both the Great Guild and the Brotherhood of the Black Heads paid the transportation costs.

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586 On workshop commissions, see Petermann, *Bernt Notke*, pp. 32-34.
587 The altarpiece stood in Black Heads’ chapel in the Dominican Friary from 1493 to 1524, when it was taken to the Black Heads’ guild house to protect from iconoclasm.
costs of 208 Rigan marks.\textsuperscript{588} The modern appellation of the double-winged painted retable derives from its original location at the Altar of the Virgin Mary in the Dominican Church of St. Catherine in Reval. Estonian art historian Mai Lumiste first attributed this painted retable to the Master of the Legend of St. Lucy (c. 1470-1500), an anonymous master working in late fifteenth-century Bruges.\textsuperscript{589} Anu Mänd suggests that the painted retable was likely commissioned before 1484 or 1488, when Maximilian instituted the bans on foreign merchants in Bruges.\textsuperscript{590} The year 1493 is thus the \textit{terminus ante quem} of

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\textsuperscript{588} Merike Kurisso, \textit{Nugliste Museum} (Tallinn: Eesti Kunstikadeemia, 2011), p. 41; On cost, see Mänd, “Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary,” p. 39. The record for transportation lists only the cost and provides no information about when the retable was commissioned. \textit{It. Anno (14)93 do leyt her gosshalk remmlyncrade de neye taffel de to de moenken steyt vp dem altar van westen komen to der gylde vnd der swarten hoefiaden behoef vnd de taffel steyt van lubek bet hijr der vracht 200 vnd 8 mr. Kompt der gylde to betalen de helftte. Is wat de taffel van westen bet to bubek gekostet hegen nycht dyt gelt hebbe ik wt gegeu; Stadttsarchiv Yallinn (Tallinna Linnaarhiiv, TLA), f. 191, n. 2, s. 16, s. 137 (1493). Quoted in Kertu Palginõmm and Ivar Leimus, “Der Marienaltar der Bruderschaft der Schwarzenhäupter vor dem Hintergrund des Wertes der abgebildeten Luxusgüter” in \textit{Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimusi/Studies on art and architecture} 24 3-4 (2015), p. 51.


\textsuperscript{590} The dating of the altarpiece has been the subject of scholarly debate. Mänd, “Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary,” pp. 38-40.

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the work, since it seems highly unlikely that the contract, work, and shipment were all finalized the same year Maximilian lifted the ban in 1491.

Even though the circumstances of production of this work remain uncertain, such as the anonymity of the Lucy Legend Master and the commissioning details, the iconography verifies that this painted retable was destined for Reval. In other words, the iconography of the altarpiece serves its intended location and viewing community—that is, for the altar of the Virgin Mary for the Brotherhood of the Black Heads. All three openings depict Marian narratives: the Annunciation on the closed wings; a double intercession with the Virgin Mary on the second view; and the Virgin enthroned on the third and final view.

The exterior view shows the Annunciation in grisaille, with the Virgin Mary on the right outer wing and the Archangel Gabriel on the left outer wing [Figs. 3.50, 3.53 in situ today]. Both figures stand on pedestals, mimicking the appearance of stone sculpture in painted form. An overhead pendant light, painted in color, frames the scene below. This Annunciation scene in grisaille recalls the same motif employed by Hans Memling in his *Greverade Altarpiece*, but also the frequent use of grisaille and Annunciation subjects on the exterior wings of fifteenth-century altarpieces in the Netherlands.

From the visual and structural resemblances to Memling’s *Greverade Altarpiece*, the attribution of the Black Head’s painted retable was formerly attributed to Hans Memling for decades.\(^{591}\) Baltic German historian Wilhelm Neumann first attributed the

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\(^{591}\) On the historiography of the Memling debate, see Mänd, “Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary” pp. 45-47; and Palginõmm, “Lumiste Problem,” pp. 72-76.
altarpiece to Hans Memling in 1887, citing its stylistic similarity to the Eyckian School of painting.\textsuperscript{592} Even though Neumann incorrectly attributed the artist, he did identify the style and origins of the work correctly—late fifteenth-century school of painting in Bruges. It is worth noting that Max Friedländer first established the oeuvre of the St. Lucy Legend Master in \textit{Early Netherlandish Painting} in 1937; and while Friedländer identified the hand of Master of the Legend of St. Lucy, he did not include the Reval altarpiece in that edition of his monumental publication on the subject.\textsuperscript{593} Decades later after Neumann and Friedländer, Mai Lumiste attributed the altarpiece to the Master of St. Lucy on stylistic grounds.\textsuperscript{594} Nicole Verhaegen, Anu Mänd, and Kertu Palginõmm further support Lumiste’s attribution, but as recently as 1994 the attribution of the Lucy Legend Master continued to be questioned.\textsuperscript{595}


\textsuperscript{593} Max J. Friedländer attributed a handful of painted works to this unnamed Master in 1903, hastily naming ‘The Master of the Legend of St. Lucy’ after a single painting, \textit{The Legend of St. Lucy} Bruges, Sint-Jacobskerk. Eventually he identified twenty-five paintings by the artist in his \textit{Altniederländische Malerei} (1937). In the later edition, see Max Friedländer, \textit{Early Netherlandish Painting}, comments and notes by Nicole Veronee-Verhaegen, trans. Heinz Norden, vol. 6b (New York, 1967), pp. 123-124.

\textsuperscript{594} For the overview on attribution history, see Andreson, “Research on Tallinn’s Dance of Death and Mai Lumiste,” p. 104.

Yet, the conflation of Memling and Lucy Legend Master is understandable, especially considering the location of two Memling altarpieces in the Baltic in Lübeck and Danzig (Gdańsk).596 Moreover, Memling frequently employed both polychrome and monochrome on the closed views, similar to the Lucy Legend Master’s closed doors.597 Another important reason for the modern confusion of Memling and Lucy Legend Master is Michel Sittow (active 1469-1525), the Livonian-native painter who probably apprenticed under Memling in Bruges in the 1480s. Art historian Ann Roberts, in her dissertation on the Lucy Legend Master, proposed that Sittow could have served as an intermediary between the Black Heads and the Lucy Legend Master.598 While the details of relationship between painters in Bruges—Sittow, Memling, and Lucy Legend Master—remain unclear, we can be certain that merchants often served as intermediaries in securing large commissions for these three artists. Representatives from the Black Heads probably met with the Lucy Legend Master to discuss details of the commissioned

retable. Comparable to other collective commissions at the time, as discussed previously, the size, subject, and format were all likely outlined in the contract.

When the *Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary* is opened, the wings on both the first and second openings reveal site-specific iconography with an elaborate display of luxurious Flemish textiles. The first opening features the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Baptist on the outer two wings [Fig. 3.51]. Once again, we can see in merchant altarpieces a clear specification to the devotion of relevant saints, as the confraternity particularly venerated St. John the Baptist. At their feet are thirty praying donors, likely members from the merchant corporations that sponsored the work [Fig. 3.55, detail]. To be sure, these are not individual portraits, but rather signal the collective enterprise of the Reval brotherhood. The inner two wings represent Christ at his knees with two angels holding the attributes of Christ’s Passion, and God the Father enthroned. This second view of the altarpiece functions as a double intercession: the Virgin Mary, pointing to her exposed breast that once nurtured her son, prays for salvation; Christ bears his wounds and appeals to God the Father.\(^{599}\)

The second opening with the double intercession of the *Virgin Mary Altarpiece* played an important role in the *memoria* of the dead for the merchant brothers. The members of the Black Heads and Great Guild paid a great sum of money for this corporate altarpiece and could potentially identify with the thirty donor figures. The message of the Virgin Mary’s protection and Christ’s salvation explicitly extended to the

local group—and certainly this program served as the backdrop for weekly memoria of the dead for services held at the Dominican Friary.\textsuperscript{600} In Reval, traditional memoria practices including reading the names of the deceased aloud, and regular liturgical remembrances on an annual, monthly, or weekly basis, depending on the donation amount.\textsuperscript{601} As with the other retables destined for local spaces in Reval, the program of the Black Head’s altarpiece corresponded to its intended location.

The final view and second opening uncovers the Virgin and Child enthroned, flanked by Sts. George and Viktor in the painted corpus with Sts. Francis and Gertrude on the outer wings [Fig. 3.52, 3.54 in situ today]. The selection of holy figures relates directly to the viewing community of the work, because the painted retable originally stood at the altar of the Virgin Mary, St. Gertrude, and St. Dorothy at the Dominican Friary. As noted above, the Black Heads and Great Guild revered several saints, particularly warrior saints; accordingly, Sts. Viktor and George were often associated with the merchant corporations. This painted retable presumably replaced an earlier wooden statue of the Virgin.\textsuperscript{602}

In addition to the iconography, the merchant corporations could have also stipulated the settings of the holy figures. Brocaded walls and decorated floors unite the assemblages of saints in both the second and third openings [Fig. 3.56]. Indeed, the Lucy Legend Master fills the entire background with decorated textiles: dark red pomegranate

\textsuperscript{600} On memoria rituals, see Mänd, “Church Art, Commemoration of the Dead and the Saints’ Cult,” esp. pp. 9-11.
\textsuperscript{601} Ibid., p. 27.
\textsuperscript{602} Mänd and Randla, “Sacred Space,” p. 51
patterns, textured green silks, and gold brocades serve as the backdrop of the second and third openings. Furthermore, God the Father enthroned on the second opening and the central image of the Virgin Mary enthroned both share the same gold cloth pattern. The holy figures are also dressed in sumptuous textiles, often lined with velvet or fur. The Lucy Legend Master also paints porphyry columns, embellished baldachins, and jeweled metalwork on St. Gertrude’s crozier, God the Father’s robe, and the Virgin’s crown.

Indeed, Bruges was a major producer of luxury textiles and fine woolen cloth in the fifteenth century, but the city also had a market for imported silks. As a result, these richly painted details are common throughout Netherlandish painting in Bruges in the fifteenth century, including numerous works by Rogier van der Weyden, Jan van Eyck, and Petrus Christus. Thus, artists had access to silks, textiles, and cloth, and also produced stock images of such material that was often reused for multiple painting. Ann Roberts also argues that the Lucy Legend Master used image sources from his travels to Spain for the painted textiles and silks in the Reval altarpiece.

Both the tailored iconographic program about Reval and Baltic saints, as well as the luxurious textiles and furnishings in the altarpiece suited the local mercantile context. The cultural transfer of the Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary demonstrates not only how

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merchants facilitated the mobility of the work of art, but also how merchants determined the final appearance of the altarpiece. After all, the Black Heads were essentially journeyman merchants who made their money from Hanse trade. More specifically, Reval merchants gained control over the Novgorod-Bruges trade pathway, exchanging grain, fur, wax, and honey from the eastern Baltic for finished goods and textiles in the Low Countries. For example in 1430, an alderman in Bruges certified a sale for twenty-three cloths to Hinrik Sten from Reval for the delivery of wax. So, raw materials from the Black Heads were exchanged directly for cloth from the Low Countries.

In considering the Lucy Legend Master’s textiles in a trade context, art historian Lehti Keelmann argues that such representation of luxury carried symbolic meaning to merchant corporations in Reval. The physical items painted in the retable, including swan down, fish, resin, and sable, were all raw products from the Black Heads’ trade; and as a result, the representation of textiles and trade products symbolize the wealth of the

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local brothers and the luxury items that they provide for the Reval community.\textsuperscript{609} Hanse historian Cartsen Jahnke estimates that a well-educated medieval merchant would be able to “classify and assess between thirty and sixty different kinds of cloth.”\textsuperscript{610} Moreover, merchants in Bruges at this time classified cloth by place of origin and not by weave. The representation of textiles in this altarpiece, even if they were from stock textile designs, must have been a visual delight for Reval merchants. Similarly, even if the figures stem from stock figures and do not resemble actual brothers, the viewing community could nonetheless identify with the donor figures in this work. In other words, they dressed themselves in products that symbolize the fruits of their profitable trade exchange.

Art historian Kertu Palginõmm specifically attends to the role of textiles in the Lucy Legend Master’s \textit{Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary}.\textsuperscript{611} She contends that the magnificently painted textiles throughout the altarpiece stand in for a local Bruges identity. That is, the textiles function dually as the artist’s signature and as an aggrandizement of the city of Bruges, akin to how the Lucy Legend Master also repeatedly represented the Bruges cityscape in his other paintings.\textsuperscript{612} In other words, the textiles function as a sign of guaranteed quality from Bruges. Indeed, this reference functions like the city view of Lübeck in the second opening of the \textit{Altarpiece of Sts.}

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\item \textsuperscript{609} Keelmann, “Fashioning Livonia.”
\item \textsuperscript{610} Jahnke, “Some Aspects of Medieval Cloth Trade in the Baltic Sea Area,” p. 76.
\item \textsuperscript{612} Palginõmm, “Luxusartikel auf dem Revaler Retabel,” pp. 108-109. See also chapter one on the role of the city view in the Lucy Legend Master’s works.
\end{itemize}
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Nicholas and Viktor in the Church of St. Nicholas, funded jointly by the Black Heads and the Great Guild. Thus, the Lucy Legend Master’s painted textiles in the Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary unite the trade cities of Bruges and Reval, and by extension, reinforce the role of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads in sustaining this trade exchange relationship. The luxurious textiles, silks, and embellished fabrics in the altarpiece communicated the trade occupation of the Brothers in bringing Flemish cloth to the city through the trade relations that the Brothers fostered.

In situ in Reval, the altarpiece was shared by both the Brotherhood of the Black Heads and Great Guild. Since the Great Guild did not have an altar at the Dominican Church, both the Black Heads and the Great Guild also used the altarpiece. After all, the Great Guild helped to pay for the transportation cost of the altarpiece and donated regularly to the maintenance of the altar in the Dominican Church. The work certainly stood as a monument to the high status of the urban groups as well as to the lucrative mercantile enterprises of the Reval community.

HOLY TRINITY ALTARPIECE

The Lucy Legend Master’s painted retable from Bruges was not the first work of art that the Black Heads purchased extraterritorially: they also commissioned a large silver statue of the Virgin Mary from Lübeck in 1480, and two cloths for the Virgin Mary altar from Bruges in 1481, depicting the Passion of Christ, and Virgin Mary, and Sts. Viktor & Maurice; and as discussed above, they also co-sponsored Rode’s Sts. Nicholas and Viktor Altarpiece for the Church of St. Nicholas with the Great Guild in 1478-

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613 Mänd, “Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary,” p. 44.
In addition to these objects, we have a textual description of the first altar of the Holy Trinity (1436) in the Church of St. Catherine, which was made partially outside Reval. The work is no longer extant—probably destroyed during the Reformation in Reval in the 1520s—but Heinrich Reincke published excerpts of the fifteenth-century altar book from St. Catherine’s Church of the Dominicans in Reval. The second altar of the Black Heads was dedicated to the Holy Trinity, St. John the Baptist, and St. Christopher, so we can assume that the altarpiece program related to the altar’s dedicated saints.

Brother accountant Hans Blomendaal describes in the book the daily tasks of altar maintenance, such as candles, guild feasts, and shoveling snow from the chapel roof, as well as the special task of commissioning a work of art for the chapel. In 1424 local woodcarver Hans Kanklowe carved an altarpiece (“tafele”) with a predella (“voeyt”) for the Holy Trinity altar, which was shipped to Germany to be painted in 1429. The account continues to describe how the altarpiece was prepared for transport, its location on the ship to protect the work of art from sea, and its destination:

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614 The Black Heads ran out of money, so they sent gold to gild the silver statue in Lübeck, in Mänd and Randla, “Sacred Space,” p. 52. Also according to Mänd, Mai Lumiste misinterpreted this cloth as the Lucy Legend Master’s Altarpiece, and argued that it came to Reval in 1481; in “Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary,” p. 38.
Also I sent 18 marks rigish in Lübeck currency with Tideke Gelpyn, which he shall give to Hermen Koerbeke in Lübeck; they shall let a black monk in Hamburg paint [the altarpiece].

The “black monk in Hamburg” (“Hoembeorch enen swarten monyck malen”) listed on the document as the man who painted the altarpiece was likely Meister Francke.

Reinicke notes that since Meister Francke was a Dominican, his name would not be recorded in documents. From this account, it is also known that ship captains did not receive special payment for the transport, since spiritual goods could sail for free. Furthermore, the work was paid for in wax, valued at 76 Lübeck marks. In comparison, the Englandfahrer merchant group in Hamburg paid an estimated 100 Lübeck marks for the St. Thomas Altarpiece, also painted by Meister Francke [c. 1424-1436, Hamburg Kunsthalle].

The altar book of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads, and more specifically, the detailed description by the accountant Hans Blomendael, provides great insight into the period logistics of the mobility of a work of art between Hanse cities. First, this altarpiece

617 “Item so sante ik doselves mede over an lubeschen gelde up 18 mark rigisch; dat antwerde ik Tydeken Gelpyn, de soldet tho Lubeke Hermen Koerbeken antwerden, de sal ze uns tho Hoembeorch enen swarten monyck malen laten [tafele].” Reprinted in Reinicke, “Probleme um den ‘Meister Francke’,” p. 24. Trans. van Bonsdorff, “Art Transfer,” p. 42.
620 Reinicke, “Probleme um den ‘Meister Francke’,” p. 24. See also Chapter Two.
travelled for free on a Hanse vessel and was well protected from the elements. Works of art were precious cargo, but more importantly, merchants tapped into the preexisting trade routes to transport art objects physically. This must have been a prudent economic maneuver. Transport also listed an Lübeck merchant in facilitating the transaction; in this case, it was “Hermen Koerbeke in Lübeck,” but in the case of the St. Birgitta Altarpiece from the Abbey in Vadstena, Sweden, as previously mentioned, it was Heinrich Greverade.

Second, the local woodcarver—who would have been a guild member of the carpenters in Reval—made the casing, and perhaps also the carved sculpture, to send to Hamburg for polychromy and additional painted wings. It certainly would have been less expensive to order the wings separately from Hamburg and make the painted and carved corpus locally. The combination of sculpture and painting from different regions was not foreign to Lübeck either: for example, the *Circle Society Altarpiece* [Fig. 2.1] was comprised of a carved corpus and painted wings from separate territorial workshops, but was assembled together in Lübeck with a local wooden case. But, after all, keeping costs low was not the goal of cultural transfer. Along with the physical transport of art objects, merchants also desired the associations of extraterritorial objects. Such desires carry meaning in the objects themselves—in style, material, and form they signal that the object was made elsewhere.

Third, the so-called “centers” of the Hanse world shifted throughout the fifteenth century. In the 1420s, the Black Heads turned to Hamburg and not Lübeck for their work of art. Similarly, in the first decades of the fifteenth century, Lübeck did not maintain
recognized workshops: during this time in Lübeck, the city’s merchants also turned to extraterritorial workshops in Flanders, Hamburg, and Westphalia to supply their local chapels with devotional sculpture and paintings. Of course, this situation changed by the end of the fifteenth century, when mercantile enclaves across the Baltic looked toward popular workshops Bruges and Lübeck. In short, the artistic network of the Hanse adapted to the demands of the market, resulting in strong connections between multiple nodes within the network.

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Cultural transfer as a term encompasses works of art in addition to other shared cultural practices, such as civic ritual, social order, language, and the built urban environment. This chapter has explored the role of merchants in facilitating cultural transfer in the Baltic, and more precisely, between three clearly linked nodes: Bruges, Lübeck, and Reval. The study of altarpieces in particular marries these cultural practices: altarpieces were used by collective merchant groups in a specific devotional space, typically in a patrician church, which was in turn connected to other civic practices, staged in the wider built environment. Just as Italian merchants served as patrons of Netherlandish painting in Bruges, Hanse merchants in the Baltic region turned to Netherlandish painting as well as to carved and/or painted altarpieces from northern German workshops to furnish their devotional spaces. As I have demonstrated, the collective merchant corporations in Hanse cities including the Great Guild and the
Brotherhood of the Black Heads, in addition to the Greverade family, acted dually as consumers and agents in cultural transfer within the Hanse network.

Cultural transfer also implies that works of art move away from their site of production to a new location. So above all, these altarpieces were portable. From their conception to completion, the artists and patrons intended for them to travel. Simply put, the mobility of these works carried varied associations to the intended viewing community of merchants in Hanse cities. As a result, where they were made and how they were transported generated additional meaning for the merchants, since these works bear witness to the patrons’ and viewers’ successful commercial enterprises. Put differently, the altarpieces represented the merchants’ ability to conduct long-distance trade, because it was otherwise not economical to arrange for an altarpiece from an extraterritorial workshop. For such reasons, as previously mentioned, the Greverade Altarpiece was described as “costly.” Moreover, Lübeck was mentioned specifically for logistical transport for the Brotherhood of the Black Heads’ painted retable, which arrived “via Lübeck,” telling us that the Reval merchants were assured by the safety of the Hamburg-Lübeck inland route rather than sailing around Jutland, which would have been cheaper, but certainly more dangerous.

Most significantly, within the Hanse network, the merchants and objects did the moving, not necessarily the artist. The majority of the artists discussed in this chapter—

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Hans Memling, Hermen Rode, Bernt Notke, the Master of the St. Lucy Legend, and Master Francke—did not travel for these merchant commissions. Rather, the commissioning merchants came to the workshops, or relied on their trade network to work out the contract details and to facilitate the physical transport of the works of art. To be sure, Bernt Notke did travel to Sweden and Denmark, as well as the Lübeck carvers Hans Hesse and Johannes Stenrat to Vadstena, Sweden. However, these requested altarpieces in Denmark and Sweden were not commissioned by merchants, but by clergy. So, it seems that merchants and merchant brotherhoods relied on their own network to find artists and workshops in addition to working out the logistics of transport. Therefore, the mercantile context in the Baltic adds new meaning to late-medieval artistic mobility—one that defines the artistic network within the mercantile structure of the Hanse trade organization.
CONCLUSION

NODAL SHIFTS

Hans Holbein the Younger’s portrait of The Merchant Georg Gisze depicts the wealthy Hanse merchant from Danzig (Gdańsk) [Fig. 4.1, 1532, Gemäldegalerie Berlin]. Upon Holbein’s second arrival in England in 1532, the painter turned to the wealthy community of Hanse merchants in the London Steelyard for portrait commissions.\textsuperscript{622}

Unlike Holbein’s other portraits of Hanse merchants in the London Steelyard, which feature a simple view of the sitter with an austere background, Holbein painted Georg Gisze in his London office surrounded by various paraphernalia that indicate his profession and status: an ink stand, currency, sealing wax, an account ledger, and a scale, among other objects that indicate wealth and status.\textsuperscript{623} In the sitter’s hand is a legible letter in Middle Low German reads, “To give to my brother the honorable Georg Gisze at London in England” (“Dem Erszamen Jorgen gisze to lunden in engelant mynem broder to handen”).\textsuperscript{624} A piece of paper behind Gisze affixed to the wall with sealing wax


\textsuperscript{624} Holman transcribes and analyzes the German dialects in the Gisze portrait, in “Holbein Portraits,” pp. 152-155.

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verifies the likeness of the portrait. Holbein represents Gisze as an individual and as a successful merchant.

The London Steelyard (Stalhof) hosted Hanse merchants living temporarily in London. Located on the north bank of the Thames, the fortified enclave contained warehouses, offices, lodgings, and a Guildhall—comparable to the living and working environment of the Hanse Kontore in Novgorod’s Peterhof and Bergen’s Tyskebrygge. During Holbein’s long tenure in London and at the Steelyard, he painted seven portraits of Hanse merchants from 1532-1536, as well as two large paintings for the Guildhall of the Steelyard—the now-lost Triumphs of Riches and Poverty. Holbein’s mercantile subjects likely sent the portraits home to family, and did not show the paintings communally in the Guildhall at the Steelyard.

The Holbein portraits of young Hanse merchants at the London Steelyard signals a shift in patronage, media, and geography in the Hanse region, when the individual aspirations of the mercantile elite replaced the collective enterprises of merchant urban groups. The medium of portraiture in particular places emphasis on the individual—both

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625 In Latin, the paper reads, “The distich on the picture of Georg Gisze/ This picture of George that you see records his features/ Such lively eyes, such cheeks has he/ In the year of his age 34/ In the year of the Lord 1552.” Ibid., p. 152.
626 However, the Hanse Kontor in Bruges resided in the Oosterlingenhuis and were highly integrated into the town. Philippe Dollinger, The German Hansa, trans. D.S. Ault (Stanford: Stanford University Press), pp. 98-106.
627 The large paintings on linen were destroyed in the eighteenth century and survive in design only. See Bätschmann and Grien, Hans Holbein, pp. 128-129.
as the single subject and patron. Simply put, after the Reformation, artists in the Hanse region no longer thrived on the collective commissions of devotional and civic-oriented objects that filled the church interiors of fifteenth-century Lübeck. Moreover, Holbein in London and the affluence of Danzig merchants further signal the move to new sixteenth-century Hanse nodal cities as part of the Hanse artistic network in place of the former strongholds: Lübeck, Reval, and Bruges.

Lübeck was the most strongly connected nodal city in the Hanse network. During the period discussed in this study, c. 1400-1530, Lübeck witnessed an expansion of artistic production, consumption, and circulation coinciding with Lübeck’s and its merchants’ connections to the Hanse network. Yet, by the year 1530, alongside the religious changes that were happening throughout northern Europe, Lübeck was struggling to maintain its position as a major player in Baltic Sea trade. Lübeck also grappled to preserve its strength as a trade city and center of artistic production: from 1500-1520, Lübeck rapidly decreased its sculpture workshop production.629 The decade of the 1530s is a terminus for this study, signaling three significant shifts in Lübeck as part of the Hanse artistic network: the waning of Lübeck as a Hanse power, the Reformation in Lübeck, and the change in mercantile corporate patronage patterns.630

THE WANING OF THE HANSE

The waning of the Hanse marks a steep decline in the old Hanse trading cities—Lübeck, Bruges, Bergen, Novgorod—and a shift of economic centers of gravity to the newly powerful trade cities in the sixteenth century, including Antwerp, Danzig (Gdańsk), Hamburg, and London. The decline of Lübeck resulted directly from the city’s loss of control over Baltic trade. Antwerp Burgomaster H.B. Cools reflected: “history teaches us that cities, important cities, in many cases only become significant and hence also centres of cultural influence, when they achieve a position of economic power.” Of course, Cools was referring to Antwerp, the important trade city that quickly rose to power at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Antwerp’s close ties to Spain, Portugal, England, and South Germany ensured Antwerp’s place in emerging global trade. Yet, similar praise can be offered for Lübeck in the fifteenth century: Lübeck rose to cultural power because of her economic position in the Hanse. In turn, the

city also lost its status as cultural and trade leader due to the gradual dissolution of the Hanse as trade leader in the Baltic.

The community of merchant groups and towns that comprised the Hanse simply failed to adapt to the emerging large-scale trade market of the sixteenth century. For example, both Bruges and Novgorod closed their Kontore enclaves in the first decades of the sixteenth century. Antwerp surpassed Bruges as trade leader in the Low Countries during this period, yet by the time the Hansards finished their lavish counting house in Antwerp in 1563, Antwerp was already in decline. Moreover, the large-scale trading firms in southern Germany, such as the Fuggers in Augsburg, provided a trade model better suited for the growing demands of sixteenth-century trade. In the last decade of the fifteenth century, the Fuggers began to move north to corner the copper and metal trade.

Hanse merchants were losing out to southern German trade and Dutch trade. The Baltic Sea trade that dominated northern European commerce for centuries was now eclipsed by the prospects of the New World and Atlantic shipping. The decline in Baltic trade was partly due to the growing strength of the Dutch in the Baltic, further seen in the detachment of the Netherlands and Bruges from the Easterlings. Dutch merchants circumvented Hanse merchants by going directly to eastern Baltic port cities to negotiate trade; in particular, the Dutch profited from oak and grain from Danzig (Gdańsk) and its Polish hinterlands. By squeezing out Hanse merchants, the Dutch disrupted the stability

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of the Hanse trade market. In short, by the mid-sixteenth century, Hanse traders no longer controlled the supply of valuable raw materials from eastern Baltic ports to the Low Countries. While Danzig was able to adapt to the new trade network outside the Hanse, Lübeck suffered terribly.636

In addition to the increased Dutch competition, trade traffic between Lübeck and Hamburg via the Wakenitz canal and road also reduced. The threat of travel around the Skaw (Cape Skage, Denmark), which once ensured Lübeck’s strategic position in Hanse trade, was now generally safe from pirates and other risks.637 As a result, there was a significant decrease in mercantile traffic through Lübeck, since merchants no longer brought their ships to Lübeck to avoid the Skaw route. The reduction of inland traffic further points to the increase in Dutch traders, whose large ships required direct North-to-Baltic Sea routes. Thus, Lübeck’s geographical position was undermined by the direct Dutch-Danzig trade routes around the Skaw.

Scandinavian merchants and monarchs also took advantage of the Hanse’s increasing struggle to maintain Baltic trade.638 Moreover, by the time of the Thirty Years War, Sweden controlled many former Wendish towns in North Germany, including

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638 North summarizes these historical events in “Hanseatic League in Early Modern Period,” pp. 113-115.
Stralsund, Greifswald, and Wismar. While the name of the Hanse persists in modern appellations of cities, such as *Hansestadt Hamburg* for example, the Hanse essentially became defunct over the course of the sixteenth century.

**THE REFORMATION IN LÜBECK**

The Reformation took about ten years to assert itself in Lübeck. From the late fourteenth century up to the Reformation, Lübeck’s urban groups dominated the social order of the city. However, these groups and their patterns of patronage and civic ritual were greatly scrutinized under the Reformation. Martin Luther himself was aware of the political power of medieval confraternities throughout Germany and Northern Europe. In 1519 he criticized confraternities in a sermon titled “Sermon von dem hochwürdigen Sakrament des heiligen wahren Leichnams Christi und von den Bruderschaften.” Luther disparages them hotly:

First, let us consider the evil practices of the brotherhoods [*Bruderschaften*]. One of these is their gluttony and drunkenness,—one or more masses are held, afterward the entire day and night, and other days besides, are given over to the devil, and they do only what displeases God. Such mad reveling has been introduced by the evil spirit, and is called a brotherhood, whereas it is rather a debauch and altogether a heathenish, nay, swinish mode of life. There would far better be no brotherhoods in the world than that such an abomination should be permitted. Temporal lords and cities should unite with the clergy abolishing it. For God, the saints, and all Christians are greatly dishonored thereby, and the divine services and feast-days made a sport for the devil. Saints’ days should be kept and hallowed with good works; and the brotherhood should also be a special treasury of good works; instead it has become a treasury of beer money. What have the names of Our Lady, of St. Anne, St. Sebastian and other saints to do with your brotherhoods, in which you have nothing but gluttony, drunkenness, squandering of money, howling, yelling, chattering, dancing, and wasting of time? If a sow were made the patron saint of such a brotherhood, she would not
The ostentatious behavior of brotherhoods in their public display was one of the main sources of Luther’s anxieties about urban organizations in Reformation-era Germany. Indeed, Lutheran practice confronted the camaraderie and revelry under the guise of devotion by brotherhoods, and for these reasons, many confraternities and brotherhoods disbanded during the Reformation. In Lübeck, the Reformation terminated the Fastnachtspiele by the Circle Society and Merchants Company and also the guild ritual Koste celebrated by the Corpus Christi Confraternity, the St. Anthony Brotherhood, and the St. Leonhard Brotherhood.

In the nearby northern German cities of Wismar and Bremen, the Reformation had already been in progress since 1525. The Protestant development in Lübeck was especially influenced by Hamburg, where local leaders called for reform since 1524. The Lübeck Council had strongly opposed the new religion since the early 1520s, and it suppressed Lutheran writings and also fined those who distributed them. Luther’s

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writings were even banned in Hanse Kontor cities in 1525, although this embargo was repealed the same year.641

St. Leonhard Brotherhood, the mercantile confraternity at the Burg, was particularly crucial in leading the Reformation against the patrician elite and city council.642 Ultimately the Reformation in Lübeck was a confrontation between the patrician and burgher classes. The former maintained a resistance to change, whereas the latter became increasingly receptive to religious reform. Similar to the causes leading up to the uprising in 1408, the council in 1528 needed funds to continue the Danish war, so they agreed to a special council of sixty-four members to raise the revenue. This special council, however, transformed into an evangelical party and put pressure on the council to adopt Reformation-era practices. Led by Jürgen Wullenwever, who later would become the mayor of Lübeck, the council yielded to the new faction and abolished Catholic ceremonies in 1530.

Martin Luther’s emissary Johannes Bugenhagen arrived in Lübeck in 1530 to consolidate Lutheran reforms.643 Lübeck officially became a Lutheran city on 27 May 1531. The Protestant Church Order of 1531 ("Der Keyerlikin Stadt Lübeck Christlike

642 The urban group maintained close connections to Nuremberg, the free imperial city that embraced Luther reforms in 1525. See Carsten Jahnke, “Gott gebe, dass wir alle selig werden mögen’ Die Mitgliederverzeichnisse der Heilig-Leichnams-, St. Antonius- und St. Leonhards-Bruderschaft zur Burg in Lübeck,” (Veröffentlichungen zur Geschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck, Reihe B, forthcoming), p. 28; and Hauschild, Kirchengeschichte Lübecks, p. 166.
Ordeninge”) transformed the seven patrician churches in the city. In 1530 the Council voted to secularize the monasteries and to confiscate the Church’s property. Gold and silver in the treasuries, including altar vessels, crucifixes, monstrances, chalices, and candlesticks were removed from churches and melted to help fund the Danish war. Since many group altarpieces were all side altars, they were allowed to stay in the possession of the brotherhoods, guilds, and societies in the patrician churches. It seems that corporate sponsorship saved the altarpieces—as Lübeck-based groups ensured the undamaged preservation of the valuable sacral objects that they had previously donated with great capital investment. The altars remained closed, and thus, the carved corpus of enshrined saints removed from view and worship. Devotion and worship in the side chapels could no longer continue, although the altarpieces remained in their pre-Reformation locations, unaltered and unopened. As part of Bugenhagen’s local involvement, the convents and monasteries in the city closed: the Castle Friary and Church of the Dominican Friars were forced to leave the site in 1530 and the building was converted to an almshouse, and St. Catherine Cloister, a Franciscan institution, became converted into a Latin school.

For Lübeck, the onset of the Reformation meant the downfall of economic and political stability, which ultimately meant the end for the urban groups. The confraternities that did survive, like St. Leonhard, transitioned as a group toward alms for the poor, finally dissolving in 1846. The Reformation displaced the leading urban

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645 Carsten Jahnke, “’Gott gebe, dass wir alle selig warden mögen’,” p. 28.
group in St. Catherine Church—the Circle Society—and their private house was destroyed in 1534 during a rebellion led by Wullenwever. Iconoclasm never came to Lübeck, however: the Circle Society’s altarpiece was transferred to Schwartau, Germany, for safekeeping, and it remained outside Lübeck until 1926. Moreover, local artist Benedikt Dreyer adapted to the demands of Lutheran art. In order to make a living in the city, Dreyer completed five panels for the parish’s new wooden pulpit in St. Marienkirche in 1533.648

Also during the 1530s, the city was waning in trade power, as mentioned previously, so the town’s merchants banded together to support Wullenwever’s new campaign against the Danes to reclaim Lübeck’s dominance over the Baltic Sea. Thus, Wullenwever sought to restore trade power to Lübeck by interfering with internal Danish conflict to gain control of Jutland. Wullenwever’s attempts completely failed: by 1537, the old council returned to power, and Wullenwever was beheaded in Wölfenbüttel.

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647 The majority of altarpieces discussed throughout this dissertation remained in their original locations in St. Marienkirche, Burgkirche, or the Cathedral until the early twentieth century, when they entered into the collection of the St. Annen-Museum.
649 The conflict with Denmark was largely sparked by the Reformation, leading to the ouster of King Christian II in Denmark. When Christian III (1503-559) defeated the exiled Christian II, Denmark converted to Protestantism. Wullenwever, however, mistakenly sided against Christian III during the internal struggle in Denmark. Dollinger, The German Hansa, pp. 320-329; Thomas Brady, German Histories in the Age of Reformations, 1400-1600 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 164.
In Reval (Tallinn) and other Hanse cities in Livonia, the merchant urban groups and city council quickly supported the new religion. In 1524 the Brotherhood of the Blackheads relocated their main altar, *The Altarpiece of the Virgin Mary for the Brotherhood of the Black Heads* [Figs. 3.50-3.52], from the Dominican Church of St. Catherine, to their confraternity house. Shortly thereafter, a mob destroyed the ‘idols’ in the church, including the urban group’s other altar, the *Holy Trinity Altarpiece* (1436), for which we only have an extant textual description.\(^650\) The same year in 1524, the city ceased Corpus Christi processions, but according to Anu Mänd, other civic rituals continued so long as they could be adapted to Protestant mentality against Catholic excess.\(^651\) Thus, the Reformation not only brought a decline in Catholic works, but also the removal of confraternal and devotional objects from their original sites.\(^652\)

**SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ARTISTIC NETWORKS**

From the waning of the Hanse and the Reformation, Lübeck and local merchants failed to maintain the artistic network of the Hanse. Lübeck workshops stagnated after 1500, and the local Lübeck woodcarver Claus Berg left for Odense in Denmark in 1520

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\(^651\) Steps included reduction of the duration of the festival and censorship of masks. Ibid., pp. 272-278.

to seek employment at the Danish courts, signaling the wider decline and departure of the city’s wood carvers and painters. By the first decades of the sixteenth century, Lübeck workshops no longer supplied the leading works of art in the Baltic region.\footnote{Berg and Hans Brüggemann were employed at Danish courts. Jan Friedrich Richter, \textit{Hans Brüggemann} (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2011); and ibid., Claus Berg: \textit{Retabelproduktion des Spätmittelalters im Ostseeraum} (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2007).} The civic and collective patronage, as seen throughout this study in Lübeck altarpieces from the fifteenth century to the Reformation, were replaced with the new commissions from royal courts in Scandinavia and northern Germany.\footnote{On civic and court patronage in the late-medieval period, see \textit{The Artist Between Court and City (1300-1600)}, ed. Dagmar Eichberger, Philippe Lorentz, and Andreas Tacke (Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag, 2017).} More specifically, in the Baltic region in the first half of the sixteenth century, we can start to see a new pattern of patronage emerge: Baltic towns increasingly looked toward the Netherlands and Atlantic trade.

To demonstrate further the shifts toward the Netherlands, let us turn to two examples of sixteenth-century patronage networks: the oeuvre of Estonian painter Michel Sittow (ca. 1469-1525) and courtly patronage of King Christian II of Denmark (1481-1559, r. 1513-1523). Sittow, born in Reval, trained locally under his father Clawes van der Sittow as a painter and woodcarver. The artist left his hometown in 1484 to study in Bruges, presumably in Hans Memling’s workshop.\footnote{The possibility of Sittow in Bruges under Memling is not supported through any archival documentation. Dirk de Vos agrees with Sittow’s apprenticeship under Memling based on stylistic grounds, and he also suggests that Memling facilitated Sittow’s court connections. In \textit{Memling}, pp. 46, 393} Sittow’s name was first discovered through court documents in Lübeck, where the Estonian painter contested his mother’s will against his stepfather Diederick van Katwijk. Until the artist’s death in 1525, Sittow

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\footnote{Berg and Hans Brüggemann were employed at Danish courts. Jan Friedrich Richter, \textit{Hans Brüggemann} (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2011); and ibid., Claus Berg: \textit{Retabelproduktion des Spätmittelalters im Ostseeraum} (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2007).}
worked in many courts throughout Europe in Spain, the Netherlands, and Denmark, and also lived intermittently in Reval from 1506-14 and 1518-1525. In Reval, Sittow served as an alderman to the St. Canute’s Guild, the guild of craftsmen to which painters and woodcarvers belonged, indicating Sittow’s esteemed artisan status.

During Sittow’s last stint in Reval, Anu Mänd has identified his hand in various projects through documentary evidence: painting canons, carving clock dials, and the sculpting and gilding for a Mass of St. Gregory scene for the Birgittine convent near Reval. Although none of his work from this period in Reval survives, it seems that the artist struggled to make a living in the Hanse city as a portrait artist. For such reasons, Sittow sought employment in and out of Reval during his lifetime, expanding his training and patronage in distant cities. Sittow’s peripatetic career is indicative of a wider shift away from the pattern of late-medieval pre-Reformation patronage in the Hanse city, where local painters and woodcarvers were forced to accept a range of commissions, and certainly could no longer sustain an artisan life on painting, carving, and/or gilding devotional programs for brotherhood altarpieces.

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Sittow traces the new order of the Baltic in the sixteenth century. Lured to the international European courts for prestigious commissions, but also remaining active in his hometown for workshop products, Sittow negotiated the growing demands of both civic and court patronage.\(^{659}\) The shift from civic to court at this time is further underscored by the fact that no work of Sittow survives in Estonia today, whereas his court portraits are in major collections across the world.\(^{660}\)

Sittow seemed to have a talent for painted portraiture at royal courts. His subjects include Mary Tudor, Catherine of Aragón, and Christian II of Denmark, among other sitters whose identity remains uncertain. He served Queen Isabel of Castile from 1492-1502, likely traveling to the Iberian Peninsula after his training in Bruges. At the Spanish court he was known as “Michel flamenco” and “Melchoir Aleman,” descriptions that reference his painting style stemming from his training in the Hanse cities of Bruges and Reval.\(^{661}\) From 1514-1517 he produced works for the Habsburg courts in Spain, Denmark, and the Netherlands.

Christian II of Denmark commissioned Michel Sittow to paint his portrait in 1514 [Fig. 4.2, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen]. Sittow arrived in Denmark in May

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\(^{660}\) For the most recent catalog on Sittow’s attributed works, see Michel Sittow. Estonian Painter at the Courts of Renaissance Europe, exh. cat. National Gallery of Art (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 39-113.

1514, and he was then sent to Copenhagen immediately on the request of Christian II.662 The portrait likely intended to commemorate the wedding of Isabella of Austria (1501-1525) and Christian II, who was crowned King of Denmark on June 11, 1514.663 The wedding was held in Brussels in June 1514, without Christian in attendance, because he was crowned king in Copenhagen that same day. Isabella was the daughter of Philip the Fair of Habsburg and granddaughter of Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian I of Austria, making her desirable Habsburg royalty.664 Once queen, Isabella became Elisabeth of Denmark and arrived in Denmark in August 1515.

In Sittow’s portrait, Christian is shown as a king: in three-quarter profile, dressed in a black beret with a golden brocade dress lined in fur cloak, and donning a full beard—a facial feature for which the Danish king was known. This portrait of the monarch represents many of the hallmark qualities of Sittow’s talent as a portrait painter trained in Bruges and his dual ability to show the sitter’s status while honoring verisimilitude. The portrait of Christian is one of the firmly attributed and dated works of Sittow, yet it is not without lingering uncertainties: the 1515 date at the top of the panel, the sitter’s unfinished left hand, and a portrait of a young man underneath the painting points, which to an earlier composition.665 There are many attempts to explain the unusual

663 The king’s grandfather, Christian I (1426-1481), founded the Oldenborg dynasty (1448-1863).
664 Holy Roman Emperor Charles V became Christian’s brother-in-law.
overpainting; for example, Lars Hendrikman argues that the original 1514 portrait is now lost, but that Sittow painted a second version, presumably at court in Mechelen the following year in 1515.\textsuperscript{666} An exhibition in 2017 on Christian II at the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen, “Pictures and Power: The Visual Politics of Christian II,” argues that the extant portrait was not the original marriage copy, but rather a portrait meant to promote Christian to the Habsburg family at Margaret of Austria’s court at Mechelen, where Elisabeth resided prior to her betrothal and arrival in Denmark.\textsuperscript{667} What is certain of Sittow’s work is that Christian II must have been pleased with the product, as future portraits visually recall Sittow’s rendering. Sittow translated the iconography of a monarch with the monochrome background, visible hands, and fashionable clothing.\textsuperscript{668}

During a visit to the Netherlands to meet Emperor Charles V Habsburg, his brother-in-law, King Christian II employed several artists from the Netherlands at court. These include some of the most well-known artists of the sixteenth century: Bernard van Orley, Gerard Horenbout Albrecht Dürer, Quentin Metsys, Joos van Cleve, Jan Gossart, and the Master of the Mary Magdalene Legend, among other unattributed artists.\textsuperscript{669}

\textsuperscript{666} Lars Hendrikman, “Portraits and Politics: Evolution in the Depiction of King Christian II of Denmark during his Reign and Exile (1513-1531)” in Trade, Diplomacy, and Change in the North Sea Area and the Baltic, c. 1350-1750, ed. Hanno Brand (Hilversum: Uitgenverji Verloren, 2005), pp. 190-92.
\textsuperscript{668} Ibid., pp. 21-23.
Dürer, while on his sojourn to the Low Countries, met the Danish monarch and wrote in his diary:

There [in Antwerp] the king of Denmark had sent for me and asked me to come quickly and portray him. I did it with charcoal… And the other day we went to Brussels… and I painted the king in oil paint.”

Dürer’s drawing [Fig. 4.3, 1521, British Museum] is presumably the charcoal work on paper mentioned in his diary. The oil painting, which was finished in Brussels in three days work for thirty gulden, is now lost. This drawing was likely executed quickly, where Dürer pays particular interest to the monarch’s facial features in preparation for the oil painting.

It seems that the likeability of the Danish king was limited to his favorable representation in art, since he received a growing reputation as the ‘Nero of the North’ due to his brutal policies in Sweden. Also during Christian’s reign from 1515-1523, even his uncle Frederick of Hollstein led a rebellion against the king. In 1523, Christian II was deposed and fled from Denmark. During his exile, Lucas Cranach

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671 Hendrikman, “Portraits and Politics: Evolution in the Depiction of King Christian II of Denmark,” p. 186.

completed his portrait, while the king stayed in Wittenberg; works survive in both paint
[Fig. 4.4, c. 1523-30, Leipzig] and on paper [Fig. 4.5, 1523 woodcut, Met Museum].
Jacob Binck, after Jan Gossaert, also produced an engraved portrait of the king [Fig. 4.6,
1524, Met Museum].

Binck’s engraving after Gossaert’s drawing was anything but apolitical, framing the former monarch framed with the flags of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden in an attempt visually to regain the lost power of the exiled king. Christian II continued to use the medium of print to persuade.

The Danish king neither limited himself to painted portraiture nor prints. During his first trip to the Netherlands, the king supposedly purchased carved retables in Antwerp for his chapel in the Copenhagen Castle. The work is a standard Antwerpian-style retable dedicated to the Passion [Fig. 4.7, Viborg Søndre Sogn, Church]. Alongside Sittow’s emergence as a court painter, and Christian II’s self-promotion through visual media, the sixteenth century also witnessed the widespread purchasing of altarpieces from the Netherlands.

Indeed, the number of sculpted retables from the Netherlands to the eastern Baltic, specifically concentrated at Danzig (Gdańsk), reached a highpoint in the sixteenth century.

Similarly, the altars produced by workshops in Brussels and Antwerp were

hotly received in Spain.\textsuperscript{675} Anna Jolly documents nearly seventy Netherlandish artists in Scandinavia and northern Germany in the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{676} These artists traveled the region, not by trade networks or port cities, but through the networks of royal and imperial patronage.

The courtly destinations of Netherlandish sculptors and architects were also Lutheran by this time, marking a change in patronage and type of art requested from the late-medieval Hanse network in Lübeck. In particular, works in Schwerin, Danzig, as well as the dukes of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Güstrow employed Netherlandish artists.\textsuperscript{677} By the end of the sixteenth century, Lübeck was also the destination of Netherlandish expatriots looking for work. For example, the city council sought the latest styles to modernize their civic architecture: in the 1570s, the town hall was given a new façade in 1570-71, and Hans Fleming finished the porch of the Lübeck Rathaus in 1594. Similarly, Hans Vredeman de Vries designed the Red Hall in Danzig Rathaus between 1592 and 1596.\textsuperscript{678}

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\textsuperscript{676} Anna Jolly includes a list of Netherlandish sculptors and architects to the Baltic region in “Netherlandish Sculptors in Sixteenth-Century Northern Germany and Their Patrons” \textit{Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art} 27/3 (1999): 119-143, appendix pp. 139-141.


\textsuperscript{678} For a general overview on Netherlandish artists in Denmark, Sweden, and Danzig in the sixteenth century, see Michael North, \textit{The Baltic}, pp. 110-118; and Heiner Borggrefe, 287
In addition to the Baltic artists and princes turning toward the Netherlands for portraits, the market in Antwerp provides another example of the change in artistic production and patronage in the sixteenth century. Increasingly the open market replaced the need for merchants to act as intermediaries or agents, to connect artists with consumers to make something to order. Maximiliaan Martens’s study on the Antwerp market determined that the market fostered social ties among painters and artists, and could match the increased demand for paintings that went to the Baltic and Atlantic, as well as the growing demand from local middle classes.

As seen through studying Lübeck in the fifteenth-century, the Hanse functioned as a late-medieval artistic network before the advent of early modern global trade. The Hanse nodal cities in the Baltic relocated in the sixteenth century, and along with the tides of commerce, art and artists also shifted. The new artistic networks formed from the opportunities offered by nascent commerce and trade in the sixteenth century, replacing the older mercantile network that furnished altarpieces for merchant urban groups across the Baltic. Lübeck artistic production never fully recovered from the events of the 1530s nor regained the trade losses. Lübeck lost her crown as Queen of the Hanse, and with it the artistic network and community that adored and adorned the late-medieval city.

APPENDIX: ILLUSTRATED FIGURES

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